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HISTORY OF EUROPE

“BELLUM maxime omnium memorabile, quæ unquam gesta sint, me scripturum ; quod, Hannibale duce, Carthaginienses cum populo Romano gessere. Nam neque validiores opibus ullæ inter se civitates gentesque contulerunt arma, neque his ipsis tantum unquam virium aut roboris fuit : et haud ignotas belli artes inter se, sed expertas, primo Punico conserebant bello : odiis etiam prope majoribus certarunt quam viribus : et adeo varia belli fortuna ancepsque Mars fuit, ut propius periculum fuerint qui vicerunt.”—LIVY, lib. xxi.





Gérard.

W. H. Egleton.

M U R A T .

HISTORY OF EUROPE

FROM

THE COMMENCEMENT OF

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

TO THE

RESTORATION OF THE BOURBONS

IN MDCCCXV

BY

ARCHIBALD ALISON, L.L.D.

F. R. S. E.

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CONTENTS OF VOL. XI.

CHAPTER LXXII.

ADVANCE OF NAPOLEON TO MOSCOW.

§	Page
1. Splendid scene at crossing the Niemen,	1
2. Passage of the remainder of the army, and arrival of the intelligence at Wilna,	2
3. Proclamation of the Emperor Alexander to the Russians on the invasion,	3
4. Noble resolution of the Russian army and people. Their forces retreat on all sides,	4
5. Direction of the Russian army at this period under Von Phull,	5
6. Birth and early history of Barclay de Tolly,	<i>ib.</i>
7. His character, and parallel with Wellington,	6
8. Early history of Bagrathion,	7
9. His character,	8
10. Napoleon enters Wilna, and remains there seventeen days,	9
11. Enthusiasm of the Poles on that event,	10
12. Address of the Polish Diet to the Emperor,	11
13. His views on the subject, and reply,	12
14. Movements of Jerome against Bagrathion,	<i>ib.</i>
15. Their ill success, and consequent displeasure of Napoleon. Combat of Mohilow,	13
16. Bagrathion effects his retreat to Smolensko,	15
17. Retreat of the Russian main army to the intrenched camp at Drissa, and description of it,	16
18. Barclay evacuates it, and retires to Witepsk,	17
19. Napoleon advances to the Dwina,	18
20. Vast importance of this movement on Witepsk, and arrival of Napoleon in front of it,	19
21. Position of the Russians, and force which Barclay had collected there,	20
22. Intelligence from Bagrathion induces him to retreat to Smolensko. Admirable order of the retreat,	<i>ib.</i>
23. Advance of the French to Witepsk, and reasons for their halt there,	21
24. Immense difficulty experienced in providing subsistence for the invading army,	22
25. Causes to which it was owing,	23
26. Deplorable condition of the corps in rear of the army,	24
27. The Emperor Alexander repairs to Moscow to hasten the armaments there,	25

§	Page
28. Proclamation to the nation,	25
29. Generous and patriotic devotion of the inhabitants of Moscow,	26
30. Opinion of Napoleon on these proclamations,	27
31. First operations of Count Wittgenstein on the Dwina, in which the French are defeated,	28
32. Napoleon reproaches Oudinot, and orders up St-Cyr,	29
33. Operations of Tormasoff against Schwartzenberg. Peace between the Russians, Turks, and Swedes, becomes known to Napoleon,	30
34. Arguments against any farther advance at the French headquarters, and answer of Napoleon,	<i>ib.</i>
35. Napoleon's answer concluded,	31
36. Reflections on this determination,	32
37. Simultaneous resolution to resume the offensive taken at the Russian headquarters,	33
38. Barclay advances against the right of the French army, and Napoleon advances towards Smolensko,	34
39. Heroic action of Newerofskoi, near Krasnoi,	35
40. Both armies approach Smolensko,	36
41. Description of that city,	37
42. First attack of Ney on the citadel, which is repulsed,	<i>ib.</i>
43. Napoleon's dispositions for a general attack on the town. Noble appear- ance of his army,	38
44. The Russian army retires in the night, leaving a strong rearguard in the city,	39
45. Bloody attack on the town, which proves unsuccessful,	40
46. Repulse of Napoleon, and results of the battle,	41
47. Splendid appearance of the burning city,	42
48. Retreat of the Russians from Smolensko,	<i>ib.</i>
49. Circular march of Barclay, to regain the Moscow road, and to rejoin Bagrathion's corps,	43
50. Battle of Valutina,	44
51. Measures of Napoleon to restore the combat. Desperate valour on both sides,	45
52. Heroic resistance of Touczkoff, and attack of Ney,	46
53. Results of this bloody action. Singular good fortune of the Russians,	47
54. Napoleon's visit to the field of battle,	<i>ib.</i>
55. General uneasiness and depression of the French army,	48
56. Enormous losses already sustained from sickness and fatigue,	49
57. Napoleon's reasons for a farther advance,	50
58. Reasons which induced the Russian generals to prepare for battle,	51
59. Operations of Schwartzenberg against Tormasoff,	52
60. And of St-Cyr against Wittgenstein,	<i>ib.</i>
61. And of Macdonald against Riga. Advance of Victor to Smolensko,	53
62. And of Augereau from the Oder, and the National Guard of France to the Elbe,	54
63. Advance of Napoleon towards Moscow,	<i>ib.</i>
64. Appointment of Kutusoff to the supreme command, and general joy it gave to the army,	55
65. Alexander unwillingly gives him the command,	56
66. His character and previous achievements,	57
67. And habits as a general,	58

CONTENTS OF CHAP. LXXII.

vii

§	Page
68. Arrival of Kutusoff at the headquarters of the army,	59
69. Extraordinary skill and order of the Russian retreat, and order of the pursuit,	<i>ib.</i>
70. Description of the country through which the French army passed in advancing to Moscow,	60
71. Extraordinary difficulties of the French army in their advance,	61
72. Superior advantages of the Russian army,	63
73. The Russians take post at Borodino. Description of their position there,	<i>ib.</i>
74. Napoleon's arrival on the field of battle. He attacks the redoubt in front,	64
75. Napoleon receives the account of the battle of Salamanca. Night previous to the battle,	65
76. Feelings of the soldiers on both sides,	66
77. Napoleon's proclamation to his soldiers,	67
78. Efforts of the Russians to animate the spirit of their troops. Kutusoff's proclamation,	68
79. Ridicule it excited in the French army,	69
80. Forces engaged on both sides. Davoust's plan of attack, which is rejected by Napoleon,	70
81. Russian dispositions for the battle,	71
82. French preparations for the attack,	72
83. Battle of Borodino,	73
84. Partial success of Ney and Eugene in the centre,	74
85. Ney and Davoust after an obstinate conflict carry the heights of Seme- nowskoi,	<i>ib.</i>
86. Dreadful struggle in the plain in front of the Russian works,	75
87. The great redoubt is taken and retaken,	76
88. Alarm on the left by an irruption of Russian cavalry,	<i>ib.</i>
89. Grand successful attack on the great redoubt,	77
90. Its capture leads to no decisive result. Fresh advance of the Russian centre,	78
91. Final operations of the day,	79
92. Close of the battle, and unparalleled fatigue on both sides,	80
93. Magnitude and importance of this battle. Loss on both sides,	81
94. Want of vigour evinced by Napoleon in this battle,	82
95. Sound reasons, nevertheless, which prevented him from engaging his reserves,	83
96. Reflections on the battle,	84
97. Distressed condition of the French army at its termination,	<i>ib.</i>
98. Orderly retreat of the Russians towards Moscow,	85
99. Debate in the Russian council of war whether they should evacuate Moscow,	86
100. Reasons assigned by Kutusoff for abandoning Moscow,	87
101. Total deficiency of supplies, if known to the Russians, would have forced the French to halt and retreat,	88
102. Great distress of the French,	89
103. Universal desertion of the city by the inhabitants,	90
104. Arrival of the French at Moscow, and description of that city,	<i>ib.</i>
105. Transport of the troops at the sight. The French enter and find the city deserted,	91
106. Preparations made by the Russians for burning the city,	92

§	Page
107. First night of the French in Moscow,	93
108. Commencement of the conflagration,	94
109. Awful appearance during the following night,	<i>ib.</i>
110. Consternation and disorder in the city,	95
111. Napoleon at length leaves the Kremlin,	96
112. Horrors of Moscow after the fire had ceased,	97
113. Semicircular march of the Russian army round Moscow,	98
114. Feelings of the soldiers in the Russian army on this occasion,	99

CHAPTER LXXIII.

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW.

1. General inclination of conquest from the north to the south,	101
2. Final cause of this law of nature,	<i>ib.</i>
3. Arrival of the era in the French wars, when the north rolled back conquest to the south,	102
4. Moral renovation of Europe which sprang from these events,	103
5. Calamitous situation of Russia at this period, and heroic courage of the Emperor and Kutusoff,	104
6. Alexander's noble proclamation,	105
7. Plan of the Russian general for surrounding the French,	106
8. Extraordinary magnitude of these combinations,	107
9. Measures of Napoleon to secure his communications,	108
10. His unsuccessful attempt at negotiation,	109
11. His reasons for a protracted stay at Moscow,	110
12. Continued fineness of the weather there. Ruin of the discipline of the French army,	111
13. Increasing strength and admirable situation of the Russian army,	112
14. Feelings and aspect of the recruits who crowded to the Russian standards, <i>ib.</i>	
15. Kutusoff's clear views of the advantages of his situation,	113
16. Ruinous partisan warfare which went on, on the flanks and rear of the French,	114
17. Ruinous effect of the plunder of Moscow on the French army,	115
18. Increasing dangers thence arising to the French position,	116
19. Napoleon's early preparations for a retreat,	117
20. Extreme difficulty of keeping open the communication in his rear,	118
21. Alexander's firm resolution not to treat for peace,	<i>ib.</i>
22. First appearance of snow. Napoleon prepares to retreat,	119
23. Kutusoff's picture of the state of his army,	120
24. Kutusoff resumes offensive operations,	121
25. Successful attack on Murat at Winkowo,	122
26. Napoleon marches towards Kalouga,	123
27. Strange caravans which followed the army,	<i>ib.</i>
28. Kutusoff moves to bar the passage of Napoleon,	124
29. Advance of Napoleon to Malo-Jaroslavitz,	125
30. Dreadful conflict in the town,	126
31. Which is at length won by the Viceroy,	127
32. Results of the battle, and dreadful appearance of the field,	<i>ib.</i>
33. Napoleon's grievous embarrassment at this result,	128

§	Page
34. Napoleon is nearly made prisoner,	129
35. Deliberations at the French headquarters on the course to be pursued,	130
36. A retreat is resolved on,	131
37. Kutusoff moves in pursuit on a parallel line,	133
38. The French repossess the field of Borodino,	<i>ib.</i>
39. Woful spectacle exhibited on passing the abbey of Kolotskoi. Disorders which already appeared in the retreat,	134
40. Severe action at Wiazma,	135
41. Defeat of Davoust there,	136
42. Results of the battle. Kutusoff fails to push the advantage to the utmost. Ney commands the French rearguard,	137
43. Commencement of the great frosts, and appearance of the atmosphere,	138
44. Dreadful depression produced thereby on the minds of the soldiers,	140
45. Increasing distresses of the troops,	<i>ib.</i>
46. Effect of these sufferings on the minds of the soldiers,	141
47. Dreadful selfishness which universally appeared,	142
48. Disastrous effects of the cold on the army,	143
49. Ruinous effect of the want of provisions for men and horses,	144
50. General indignation against Napoleon,	145
51. Continuance of the retreat to Dorogobouge,	<i>ib.</i>
52. Disasters of the Viceroy in his retreat,	146
53. Movements of Kutusoff in his parallel march at this time,	147
54. Napoleon receives intelligence of Malet's conspiracy at Paris,	<i>ib.</i>
55. Arrival of the corps at Smolensko,	148
56. Vain efforts of Napoleon to provide magazines along his line of retreat,	149
57. Disastrous intelligence from the armies on both flanks. Important opera- tions of Wittgenstein on the Dwina,	150
58. The Russians under Wittgenstein carry Polotsk by storm,	<i>ib.</i>
59. Check of Steinheil, and continued successes of Wittgenstein,	151
60. Indecisive action at Smoliantzy,	152
61. Operations of Tchichagoff on the other flank,	<i>ib.</i>
62. Operations of Schwartzenberg against Sacken,	153
63. Capture of Minsk and the bridge of Borissov by Tchichagoff,	154
64. Partial completion of the plan for surrounding Napoleon,	155
65. Alarmed by these disasters, Napoleon resolves to retire from Smolensko to the Niemen,	<i>ib.</i>
66. Arrival of Kutusoff at Krasnoi,	156
67. Order of the French retreat from Smolensko,	157
68. Kutusoff's reasons for avoiding an action with Napoleon in person,	<i>ib.</i>
69. Impression the name of Napoleon still produced on the minds of men,	158
70. Successful attack on Eugene's corps,	159
71. Arrangements for cutting off Davoust as he passed. Napoleon's resolu- tion to assist him,	160
72. Battle of Krasnoi,	161
73. Imminent danger and heroic conduct of Ney,	162
74. Glorious retreat of Ney,	163
75. Heroic conduct of Ney during his retreat,	164
76. General results of the battle of Krasnoi,	<i>ib.</i>
77. Horrible confusion which reigned in the French army,	165
78. Prodigious losses of the French army, and cessation of the Russian pursuit,	166

§	Page
79. Breaking down of the bridge of Borissow, and junction of Napoleon and Victor,	167
80. Forces which Napoleon now collected, and those which Tchichagoff had to oppose him,	168
81. Napoleon's hazardous situation, and admirable plan for forcing his way through,	169
82. Napoleon's measures to deceive the enemy as to his real point of passage,	170
83. Singular skill and good fortune by which the passage was effected,	<i>ib.</i>
84. Tchichagoff's measures on hearing of the passage,	171
85. Capture of Partonneaux's division by Wittgenstein,	172
86. The French force their way through Tchichagoff's corps,	173
87. Furious attack of Wittgenstein on the troops on the left bank,	<i>ib.</i>
88. Frightful scene when the bridges broke, and generous devotion shown by many at this awful passage,	174
89. Results of this dreadful passage,	175
90. Dreadful disorders which now ensued in the retreat,	176
91. Napoleon leaves the army for Paris,	177
92. Increased severity of the cold, and dreadful sufferings of the troops,	178
93. Frightful appearance of the night bivouacs,	179
94. Effects of those disasters on the minds of the soldiers,	<i>ib.</i>
95. Physical effects of the extreme cold,	180
96. Prodigious losses of the detachments which joined the French army,	181
97. Causes which preserved the French from total destruction,	182
98. The Russians suffered more from cold than the French,	183
99. Capture of Wilna, and immense losses in its vicinity,	184
100. Passage of the bridge of Kowno,	185
101. Heroic conduct of Ney on this occasion,	186
102. Appearance of Ney at Gumbinnen after passing the Niemen, and passage of that river by the rearguard,	<i>ib.</i>
103. Operations against Macdonald near Riga, and evacuation of the Russian territory by Schwartzenberg,	187
104. Napoleon's conversation with Maret at Wilna,	189
105. Astonishment in Wilna when the remains of the French army arrived,	<i>ib.</i>
106. Sufferings of Poland during the campaign,	190
107. Excessive penury to which the inhabitants of all ranks were reduced,	191
108. Napoleon arrives at Warsaw,	192
109. His remarkable conversation with the Abbé de Pradt,	<i>ib.</i>
110. His statement of his designs,	193
111. Extraordinary ideas which he expressed,	194
112. Retreat of the remains of the Grand Army to Königsberg and Dantzic,	195
113. Arrival of Alexander at Wilna, and horrible state of the hospitals,	<i>ib.</i>
114. Humanity and courage of Alexander,	197
115. Noble proclamation of Alexander to his soldiers,	198
116. Losses of the French during the campaign, and of the Russians,	199
117. Reflections on the military causes of this prodigious overthrow,	200
118. Great ability of Napoleon generally in the campaign,	<i>ib.</i>
119. Heroic constancy of the Russians,	201
120. The severity of the Russian winter will not explain the disaster,	<i>ib.</i>
121. The disasters were owing to the Russian superiority,	202
122. The cold was unusually long of setting in,	203
123. And it affected the Russians as much as the French,	<i>ib.</i>

CONTENTS OF CHAP. LXXIV.

xi

S	Page
124. Most of Napoleon's losses took place before the cold set in, . . .	204
125. And were due to his own want of prudence in the campaign, . . .	205
126. Napoleon's long stay at Moscow was not what ruined him, . . .	207
127. He had reasonable ground for expecting the submission of Russia after Moscow was taken, . . .	208
128. The burning of Moscow did not occasion it, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
129. Real causes, in a military point of view, of the disaster, . . .	209
130. The Russian light horse was the great cause of his ruin, . . .	210
131. Extraordinary ability of Kutusoff's conduct in the pursuit, . . .	211
132. Moral grandeur of the conduct of the Emperor and people of Russia, . . .	212
133. Moral causes to which the overthrow of Napoleon was owing, . . .	213
134. Steps which brought about this punishment, . . .	214

CHAPTER LXXIV.

RESURRECTION OF GERMANY.

1. Immense sensation produced in Europe by the Moscow campaign, . . .	216
2. Unbounded transports in Prussia and Northern Germany, . . .	217
3. Cruelties to those engaged in Schill's conspiracy, . . .	218
4. Enormous pecuniary exactions levied by the French in Prussia, . . .	219
5. Great impression which the Moscow campaign produced in Prussia, . . .	220
6. Convention of General York, . . .	221
7. Character of York, . . .	222
8. Meeting between him and Diebitch, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
9. York is at length decided, . . .	223
10. Convention of Potscherau, and York's views in it, . . .	224
11. Character and conduct of Diebitch in this affair, . . .	225
12. Extreme embarrassment of the King, and his disavowal of the convention, . . .	226
13. Progress of events in Prussia, . . .	227
14. Measures of York to gain time, . . .	228
15. Retreat of the French army through Lithuania and Prussia, . . .	229
16. Continued retreat to the Oder, and advance of the Russians, . . .	230
17. Retreat and abandonment of the army by Murat, . . .	232
18. Able measures of Eugene to arrest the evil, . . .	233
19. Retreat of the Austrians from Poland, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
20. The Russians pass the Oder. The French evacuate Berlin, and retire across the Elbe, . . .	234
21. Death of Kutusoff, . . .	235
22. Appointment of Wittgenstein to the command, and capture of Berlin, . . .	236
23. Departure of Frederick-William from Berlin, . . .	237
24. Great levies of troops in Prussia, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
25. Universal and noble outbreak of patriotic spirit in Prussia, . . .	238
26. Extraordinary rapidity with which the army was recruited, . . .	240
27. Admirable organisation in Prussia, which turned this spirit to the best account, . . .	241
28. And great additions made to the <i>matériel</i> of the army, . . .	242
29. Continued difficulties and indecision of the King, . . .	243
30. Manner in which Napoleon received these advances from Prussia, . . .	244
31. Treaty of Kalisch ratified, . . .	245

§	Page
32. Energetic measures adopted by Prussia,	246
33. Progress of the negotiations between Prussia and France,	247
34. Real motives of the war, as stated in Hardenberg's proclamation,	249
35. Answer of Maret on the part of France,	250
36. Additional conventions at Kalisch,	251
37. Arrival of Napoleon at the Tuileries,	<i>ib.</i>
38. Universal consternation at Paris on the news of the retreat and the Emperor's arrival being received,	252
39. Restoration of public confidence throughout the empire,	253
40. Conspiracy of Malet,	254
41. Progress and great success of the conspiracy,	256
42. Savary and others arrested by the conspirators,	<i>ib.</i>
43. Continued success of Malet, who shoots the governor of Paris,	257
44. His subsequent seizure and overthrow,	258
45. His heroic death,	259
46. Effect which this conspiracy produced in Paris,	260
47. Napoleon's extraordinary anxiety on this conspiracy,	261
48. His speech on the subject in the Council of State,	262
49. Reflections on this event,	263
50. Device concerning the French regency,	264
51. Great conscription of 350,000 men voted by the Senate,	265
52. Napoleon arranges his differences with the church,	266
53. Napoleon's hidden designs regarding the Pope and the Catholic church,	267
54. His plans for making Paris the head of the church,	269
55. Commencement of the conferences with the Pope at Fontainebleau,	270
56. Articles of the Concordat,	271
57. Extraordinary joy of Napoleon at the conclusion of the treaty,	272
58. Rapid change in the opinion of the Pope and his council,	273
59. Moderate and prudent conduct of Napoleon on this retractation,	274
60. His reasons for this moderation,	275
61. Napoleon's speech to the legislative body,	276
62. Important statistical details with which it was accompanied,	277
63. Surprising magnitude of the sums expended by Napoleon on public improvements,	278
64. Cost of the public edifices at Paris,	280
65. Finances of the French empire at this period,	<i>ib.</i>
66. Military strength of the empire,	281
67. And of its navy,	282
68. Dangers with which it threatened the British islands,	283
69. Remarkable failure of the powers of the conscription at this period,	284
70. Reason of this circumstance,	<i>ib.</i>
71. Diminution in the age and standard of height as the Revolutionary wars advanced,	286
72. Great losses of the French in military stores in Prussia,	287
73. Napoleon's vigorous measures to repair these losses,	289
74. Levy of the <i>Gardes d'honneur</i> and maritime conscripts,	290
75. Force thus collected by Napoleon for the campaign,	291
76. Seizure of the property of the Communes for the public treasury,	292
77. Progress of the cadastre,	294
78. Failure of the financial measures and arbitrary exactions,	<i>ib.</i>
79. Lasting interest of this last <i>exposé</i> by Napoleon,	295

CONTENTS OF CHAP. LXXV.

xiii

§	Page
80. Ineffectual attempts to induce Saxony to join the league against France,	296
81. Failure of all attempts to gain over Saxony,	297
82. Negotiations with Austria. First measures of Austria after the Moscow retreat,	<i>ib.</i>
83. Secret negotiation between Austria and England,	299
84. Secret views of Metternich at this period,	300
85. Austria begins to arm, to give weight to her mediation,	301
86. Announcement by Austria of an armed mediation, and arrival of Narbonne at Vienna,	302
87. Austria more openly inclines to the coalition,	303
88. Secret convention between Russia and Austria,	304
89. And between Russia and Saxony,	<i>ib.</i>
90. Remonstrances of Napoleon against the Austrian proceedings,	305
91. Metternich's reply,	306
92. Negotiations with Sweden,	307
93. Views of Denmark at this period,	308
94. Treaty of Oerebro with Sweden,	<i>ib.</i>
95. Accession of Denmark to the side of Napoleon,	309
96. Negotiations between the Allies and Murat,	310
97. Energetic measures of Prussia in support of the war. Institution of the order of the Iron Cross,	311
98. And universal enthusiasm which prevailed,	312
99. Moral weakness of the French empire, notwithstanding its immense physical resources,	313

CHAPTER LXXV.

CAMPAIGN OF LÜTZEN AND BAUTZEN.

1. Fermentation on the left bank of the Elbe,	315
2. Formation of the Landwehr and the Landsturm in Prussia,	316
3. Animated proclamation by the King to his people,	317
4. Positions of the French on the Elbe when the Russians crossed it,	318
5. Disposition and number of the French troops in the fortresses on the Vis- tula and Oder,	319
6. Dispositions and strength of the Prussian forces,	320
7. Forces and position of the Russians,	<i>ib.</i>
8. Occupation of Hamburg by the Allies,	321
9. Universal enthusiasm of the people,	322
10. Insurrection in Lüneburg,	323
11. Extraordinary incident by which the prisoners were delivered and Morand defeated,	324
12. General insurrection between the Elbe and the Weser,	325
13. Advance of the Allies to the Elbe,	326
14. Wittgenstein's approach to the Elbe,	327
15. Combat of Mockern, and retreat of Eugene across the Elbe,	328
16. Napoleon's measures before setting out for the army,	329
17. Arrival of Napoleon at Mayence, and great preparations there,	331
18. Napoleon's efforts to augment his forces there,	332
19. Defective appearance of the troops which crossed the bridge of Mayence,	<i>ib.</i>

§	Page
20. Bad condition of his cavalry and artillery,	333
21. Forces of Napoleon at this period,	334
22. Inferiority of the Allies at the opening of the campaign,	336
23. Reasons for crossing the Elbe,	337
24. Aspect of the Russian and Prussian troops which entered Dresden,	338
25. Appearance of the Prussian troops,	339
26. Noble spirit by which they were animated,	340
27. Habits of the Emperor and King at Dresden, and religious spirit by which they were animated,	341
28. Confusion and disorders on the French line of march,	342
29. Approach of the two armies to each other,	344
30. Position and measures of the Allies,	345
31. Combat at Poserna,	<i>ib.</i>
32. Death of Marshal Bessières,	346
33. Movements and position of the French,	347
34. Allied march and plan of attack,	348
35. Battle of Lützen,	349
36. Commencement of the action, and success of the Allies on the right,	<i>ib.</i>
37. Napoleon's measures to repair the disorder,	350
38. Counter movements of Wittgenstein,	351
39. Napoleon hastens to the right to restore the battle,	352
40. Prodigious efforts of both parties at the decisive point,	353
41. Conflict of the Berlin volunteers and French conscripts,	354
42. Final charge of the French Guards,	355
43. Retreat of the Allies, and close of the action,	356
44. Night attack of the Allied horse on the French line,	357
45. Aspect of the field of battle,	358
46. Loss on both sides, and reflections on the battle,	359
47. Retreat of the Allies to Dresden,	360
48. Beautiful appearance of Dresden on the approach of the French,	361
49. Entry of Napoleon into Dresden,	362
50. Napoleon's preparations for the passage of the Elbe,	363
51. A passage is effected at Dresden,	364
52. Return of the King of Saxony to Dresden, and his final adherence to the cause of Napoleon,	366
53. The Saxons are placed under Reynier, and Thielman joins the Allies,	367
54. Alarming state of the negotiations with Austria,	<i>ib.</i>
55. Mission of Count Bubna to Dresden, and Stadion to Bautzen,	369
56. Napoleon's secret proposals to Russia at this period,	370
57. Reflections on Napoleon's perfidious conduct on this occasion,	371
58. Forces of the opposite armies at Bautzen,	<i>ib.</i>
59. Description of the position of Bautzen,	373
60. Reconnoissance of Napoleon, and his general plan of attack,	374
61. Disaster of Bertrand, and balanced success on the French left,	375
62. Distribution of the Allied army in the position,	<i>ib.</i>
63. General aspect of the Allied position,	376
64. Napoleon's plan of attack,	377
65. Passage of the Spree, and commencement of the action,	378
66. Severe action on the French right,	379
67. Serious conflict in the centre,	380
68. Results of the first day's battle,	381

CONTENTS OF CHAP. LXXVI.

XV

§	Page
69. Battle on the 21st. Success of the Russians on the right, . . .	382
70. Progress of the battle in the centre and left, . . .	383
71. Great effect of the movement of Ney on the left, . . .	384
72. Preititz is retaken by Blucher, and Ney checked, . . .	385
73. Grand attack of Napoleon on the Allied centre, . . .	386
74. The Allies resolve to retreat, . . .	387
75. Sublime spectacle when the Allied army retreated, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
76. Termination of the battle, . . .	388
77. Napoleon's proposal for a monument on Mont Cenis to commemorate this epoch, . . .	389
78. Admirable conduct of the Emperor Alexander during the battle, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
79. Losses on both sides in the battle, . . .	390
80. Great kindness of the Saxon peasants to the wounded on both sides, . . .	391
81. Combat of Reichenbach, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
82. Firm resistance of the Allies, who at length retire, . . .	392
83. Death of Duroc, . . .	393
84. Mournful scene round the tent of Napoleon, . . .	394
85. General despondency of the French generals, . . .	395
86. Retreat of the Allies towards Liegnitz, . . .	396
87. Combat and defeat of the French near Haynau, . . .	397
88. Continuance of the retreat to Liegnitz and the Oder, . . .	398
89. Reasons which induced the Allied sovereigns to desire an armistice, . . .	399
90. Great satisfaction of Napoleon at this state of affairs, . . .	400
91. Reasons which, nevertheless, induced Napoleon to desire an armistice, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
92. Important partisan successes in the French rear, . . .	401
93. Repulse of Oudinot at Luckau, . . .	402
94. Attack on the French depot at Leipsic, . . .	403
95. Operations against Hamburg by the French, . . .	404
96. Capture of that city by Vandamme, . . .	405
97. Progress towards the adjustment of an armistice, . . .	406
98. Difficulty in arranging the armistice, as to the line of demarcation, . . .	407
99. The line of demarcation is at length fixed on, . . .	408
100. Terms of the armistice, . . .	409
101. Perfidious attack on Lutzow's corps, and wound of Körner, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
102. Great talent displayed by Napoleon in this campaign, . . .	410
103. Ruinous effects of this armistice on the fortunes of Napoleon, . . .	412
104. Singular manner in which it arose out of the Austrian alliance, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
105. Sublime spectacle exhibited by Germany at this period, . . .	413
106. Its elevated moral spirit, . . .	414

CHAPTER LXXVI.

LIBERATION OF SPAIN—CAMPAIGN OF VITORIA.

1. Singular progress in the warlike resources of France during the Revolution, . . .	41
2. Limit imposed to its progress from the moral laws of nature, . . .	416
3. Contrast which the progress of the efforts of England affords during the same period, . . .	<i>ib.</i>
4. Vast exertions made at last by the British people, . . .	417

§	Page
5. Astonishing magnitude of their forces at the close of the war,	418
6. Difference in the resources of the two countries,	<i>ib.</i>
7. Causes of this extraordinary difference,	419
8. The universal spoliation of the French system of war,	420
9. General unanimity in Great Britain as to the prosecution of the war,	421
10. Argument of the Opposition against the conduct of the Spanish war,	422
11. Comparative advantages of the French and British positions in Spain,	<i>ib.</i>
12. Inadequacy of Wellington's force,	423
13. The whole successes attributable to Wellington and his soldiers,	424
14. Defective combinations of the government,	<i>ib.</i>
15. Inadequacy of the reinforcements sent to Spain,	425
16. Reply on the part of government,	426
17. Great amount of the successes which had been gained,	427
18. Defence of the general military measures of the government,	428
19. Means taken for recruiting the army,	429
20. Vast military force displayed by Great Britain during the year,	430
21. Great amount of the naval force at this period,	<i>ib.</i>
22. Prodigious expenditure of the year,	431
23. Revenue raised, and loans contracted during the year,	432
24. Glorious position which Great Britain occupied at this period,	434
25. Ruinous change introduced at this period into the finance system of Great Britain,	435
26. Mr Vansittart's new plan of finance, and arguments in support of it,	<i>ib.</i>
27. Alleged danger from the Sinking Fund operating too quickly,	436
28. The past experience of its powers,	437
29. Modification of Mr Pitt's scheme proposed,	438
30. Arguments of Mr Huskisson and Mr Tierney against the new plan,	439
31. Advantages of Mr Pitt's scheme,	440
32. And fundamental disadvantage of the new one,	441
33. The relief which it would afford would be merely temporary,	<i>ib.</i>
34. A temporary alienation of part of the fund urged as preferable to a permanent alteration of scheme,	442
35. Reflections on this great change in our financial system,	443
36. Difference in the results of the two systems,	444
37. Answer to the objection that debt was simultaneously contracted during the war,	445
38. The funds for the payment of the debt were all provided for by taxes,	446
39. Wellington's efforts to reorganise his army in the winter of 1812,	447
40. Wellington is appointed generalissimo of the Spanish armies, and goes to Cadiz,	448
41. Revolt of Ballasteros, which leads to his being deprived of his command,	449
42. Intrigues at Cadiz, and arrival of Wellington there,	450
43. Wellington's reception at Cadiz, and measures for the campaign agreed on there,	451
44. Violent democratic passions at Cadiz, and Wellington's sage advice regarding them,	452
45. Abolition of the Inquisition, and commencement of war between the democrats and the clergy,	454
46. Enormous amount of the contributions levied in the provinces under the French,	<i>ib.</i>

§	Page
47. Enormous contributions levied in kind,	455
48. Abuses in the government and administration of Portugal,	456
49. Vigorous efforts of Wellington to arrest these evils,	457
50. Miserable condition of the Spanish armies,	458
51. Forces with which Wellington was prepared to open the campaign,	459
52. Distribution of these forces,	460
53. Position and strength of the French armies in the Peninsula,	461
54. Their latent sources of weakness and disunion,	462
55. Operations on the east coast of the Peninsula,	463
56. Forces and position of Suchet at this period,	464
57. Immense levies of money by Suchet on Valencia,	465
58. Suchet resumes the offensive, and defeats the Spanish advanced guard,	<i>ib.</i>
59. Battle of Castalla,	466
60. Defeat of the French,	467
61. Operations in the northern provinces,	468
62. Napoleon's instructions on this emergency to Joseph,	470
63. Napoleon's instructions for the suppressing of the northern insurrection,	<i>ib.</i>
64. The guerillas' successful operations in Biscay,	472
65. Clausel's vigorous campaign against them,	<i>ib.</i>
66. Wellington prepares to take the field, and fine condition of his army,	473
67. His plan of operations,	474
68. March of Wellington into Spain,	<i>ib.</i>
69. He advances by Ciudad Rodrigo and Salamanca, across the Douro,	475
70. Burgos is evacuated, and the French retreat to the Ebro,	476
71. Confusion and distress of the French retreat,	477
72. March of the Allies to Vitoria,	478
73. Extraordinary difficulties of the march,	479
74. Beauty of the scenery through which the army passed,	480
75. Accumulation of Joseph's army and baggage in the basin of Vitoria,	481
76. Which was augmented by the spoil of Madrid, and the pay of the troops sent from France,	482
77. Description of the basin of Vitoria, and the field of battle,	483
78. Forces of the armies on the opposite sides,	484
79. British plan of attack,	485
80. French position, and order of battle,	486
81. Battle of Vitoria. Success of Hill on the right,	487
82. Progress of Wellington in the centre,	488
83. Decisive success of Graham on the left,	489
84. Retreat of the French to Vitoria, and their total defeat,	490
85. Splendid spectacle at the close of the battle,	491
86. Results of the battle, and prodigious amount of the spoil taken,	492
87. Booty and captives taken,	493
88. Wellington's generous conduct to the captured ladies,	494
89. Evacuation of Madrid and Valencia by the French, who retire behind the Ebro,	495
90. Imminent danger and narrow escape of Clausel,	496
91. Operations against Pampeluna and Foy's division,	497
92. Reflections on Wellington's glorious successes,	498

CHAPTER LXXVII.

CAMPAIGN OF THE PYRENEES.

§	Page
1. Investment of San Sebastian and Pampeluna,	501
2. Description of San Sebastian,	<i>ib.</i>
3. Commencement of the siege by Sir T. Graham, and defensive measures of the governor,	503
4. Storming of St Bartholomew,	504
5. Breaching batteries established against the fortress,	505
6. Preparations for storming the breach, and for its defence, . .	<i>ib.</i>
7. Assault on the place,	506
8. Repulse of the assault,	507
9. Wellington arrives, and turns the siege into a blockade, . .	508
10. Napoleon sends Soult with supreme powers to Bayonne, . .	509
11. Forces which Soult found there,	510
12. Character of Marshal Soult,	<i>ib.</i>
13. His division of his forces, and preparations for the campaign, .	512
14. Position and strength of the British army,	513
15. Irruption of the French into the Pyrenees,	514
16. Their success at the pass of Roncesvalles,	515
17. Description of the Puerta de Maya,	516
18. Combat there, and defeat of the British,	517
19. Advantages gained by Soult on this day's operations, . . .	518
20. Retreat of the British to the neighbourhood of Pampeluna, . .	519
21. Wellington's measures on hearing of these disasters, . . .	520
22. Battle of Soraoren,	521
23. Defeat of the French on the right,	522
24. Dreadful contest in the centre and on the right-centre, . .	523
25. In which the French are at length repulsed,	524
26. Soult determines to retreat,	525
27. Movements on both sides following the battle,	<i>ib.</i>
28. Great success of Dalhousie on the left,	526
29. Storming of Soraoren, and general retreat of the French, . .	527
30. Disastrous retreat of the French across the frontier,	528
31. Soult narrowly escapes being made prisoner,	529
32. Disorderly retreat of the French to Echalar,	530
33. Dreadful disaster in the defile,	<i>ib.</i>
34. Glorious combat at the Puerto d'Echalar and the rock of Ivantelly, .	531
35. Result of the battles of the Pyrenees,	532
36. Comparative losses on both sides,	533
37. Preparations of the governor of San Sebastian during the suspension of the siege,	534
38. Renewal of the siege,	535
39. Preparations for the assault,	<i>ib.</i>
40. Universal anxiety which prevailed,	536
41. Dreadful assault of the breaches,	537
42. Which after a desperate carnage is repulsed,	538
43. Extraordinary expedient adopted by Graham,	539
44. By which at length the breach is won,	<i>ib.</i>

CONTENTS OF CHAP. LXXVIII.

xix

S	Page
45. Disgraceful excesses in San Sebastian after the storm, . . .	540
46. Reflections on these atrocities, . . .	541
47. Siege and capture of the citadel, . . .	542
48. Reflections on the siege, and losses it occasioned to the Allies, . . .	543
49. Comparative merit of the besiegers and besieged, . . .	544
50. Delay in sending out stores for the siege from England, . . .	545
51. Soult's attempt to raise the siege, . . .	546
52. Defeat of the French by the Spaniards at San Marcial, . . .	547
53. Results of this action, . . .	548
54. Comparative merit of Great Britain and Spain in the struggle, . . .	549

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

CHARACTERS OF NAPOLEON, MURAT, NEY, AND BERTHIER.

1. Importance of personal anecdote in the delineation of character, . . .	551
2. Rich materials in this respect which exist regarding Napoleon, . . .	552
3. General character of Napoleon's mind, . . .	553
4. Singular combination of good and evil qualities which he possessed, . . .	554
5. Clue which is afforded to his character by his bad qualities, . . .	555
6. And his great and good qualities, . . .	556
7. His general character, . . .	557
8. Mixed good and bad qualities of his character, . . .	559
9. His mixture of generosity and selfishness, . . .	560
10. It arose partly from the vices and irreligion of the Revolution, . . .	561
11. He personified its ruling principle, . . .	ib.
12. Inconceivable peculiarities of his character, . . .	562
13. His entire insensibility to his own faults, . . .	563
14. The despotic nature of his system of government, . . .	564
15. His despotism naturally flowed from the Revolution, . . .	565
16. His often contracted policy, . . .	566
17. And repeated injuries from it to his own fortunes, . . .	567
18. Strange manner in which he marred his own designs, . . .	568
19. His personal littlenesses, . . .	569
20. Great military errors which he committed, . . .	570
21. Especially in Germany in 1813, . . .	571
22. The glories of his last campaign in France, . . .	572
23. His conduct in refusing peace at Chatillon, . . .	573
24. His marvellous sway over the minds of his soldiers, . . .	574
25. Examples of his power, . . .	575
26. Distribution of crosses of the Legion of Honour, and instant promotion, . . .	576
27. Frankness in which he indulged his soldiers on these occasions, . . .	577
28. His violent temper, but frequent forgiveness, and habits of economy, . . .	578
29. Extraordinary power of judging of enemies in the field, . . .	579
30. His habits at the bivouac fires, . . .	580
31. Evil consequences which resulted from the Emperor's decided opinion and conduct, . . .	581
32. The bad effects of his impetuous temper and habits, . . .	582
33. Intensity with which he clung to his preconceived ideas, . . .	584

§	Page
34. Early appearance of this peculiarity in his character, and of his views towards the East,	585
35. His low opinion both of men and women,	586
36. His amours,	587
37. His extraordinary powers of mental exertion,	589
38. His habits during a campaign,	590
39. His travelling carriage, and habits on the road,	591
40. His habits on horseback,	592
41. His impetuous habits in travelling, and during a campaign,	593
42. Custom in passing through the troops,	594
43. Receipt of despatches on the road,	595
44. Antechamber of Napoleon during a campaign,	596
45. His habits and labours in the cabinet,	597
46. His habits of writing and dictating,	598
47. The military portfolio and its keeper,	599
48. Napoleon's uniform and robust health,	600
49. His command of himself in regard to sleep,	602
50. His occasional acts of humanity and generosity,	603
51. His generous conduct to an English sailor,	605
52. His habits at Paris and St Cloud,	<i>ib.</i>
53. His habits at meals and in the evening,	606
54. His habits as a husband and a father,	608
55. His feelings as to religion,	609
56. His conduct at St Helena,	610
57. Importance of the preceding detail,	611
58. Character of Murat,	612
59. His military abilities and civil weaknesses,	614
60. His appearance and dress, as contrasted with that of Napoleon,	615
61. His extraordinary gallantry of conduct,	<i>ib.</i>
62. Character and history of Ney,	616
63. His overflowing courage and simple character,	617
64. His military character,	618
65. Inefficiency in separate command,	619
66. And moral weaknesses,	<i>ib.</i>
67. Character of Berthier,	620
68. Great inferiority of the marshals and generals to Napoleon,	621
APPENDIX,	623

HISTORY OF EUROPE.

CHAPTER LXXII.

ADVANCE OF NAPOLEON TO MOSCOW.

AT one in the morning, the corps of Davoust broke up and crossed the river, and shortly after its advanced guard took possession of Kowno. The tent of the Emperor was placed on an eminence three hundred paces from the bank, and as the sun rose he beheld the resplendent mass slowly descending to the bridges. The world had never seen so magnificent an array as lay before him. Horse, foot, and cannon, in the finest order, and in the highest state of equipment, incessantly issued from the forest, and wound down the paths which led to the river; the glittering of the arms, the splendour of the dress, the loud shouts of the men as they passed the imperial station, inspired universal enthusiasm, and seemed to afford a certain presage of success. The burning impatience of the young conscripts; the calm assurance of the veteran soldiers; the confident ardour of the younger officers; the dubious presentiments of the older generals; filled every heart with thrilling emotion. The former were impatient for the campaign as the commencement of glory and fortune; the latter dreaded it as the termination of ease and opulence. None entered on it without anxiety and interest, but none with such sanguine hopes

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

1.

Splendid
scene on the
crossing the
Niemen.
June 24.

Atlas,
Plate 73.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

as the Emperor. No sinister presentiments were visible on his countenance; the joy which he felt at the recommencement of war was apparent even on his visage, and communicated a universal degree of animation. Two hundred thousand men, including forty thousand horse, of whom twelve thousand were cuirassiers, cased in glittering steel, passed the river that day in presence of the Emperor. They equalled in number, and far exceeded in equipment and discipline, the bands which crossed the Hellespont on their way to the Holy Land, and which the imagination of the poet compared to the leaves that fall in autumn.* Could the eye of prophecy have foreseen the thin and shattered remains of this countless host, which a few months afterwards were alone destined to regain the shores of the Niemen, the change would have appeared too dreadful for any human powers of destruction to have accomplished.¹

¹ Ségur, i.
144, 145.
Bout. i. 162.
Fain, i. 167.
Chamb. i.
172.

2.
Passage
of the re-
mainder of
the army,
and arrival
of the intel-
ligence at
Wilna.

The passage of troops continued incessantly during the 24th and 25th; and the cavalry under Murat, passing Davoust's corps, took the lead in the advance. The Viceroy and Jerome, at the head of their respective armies, crossed some days afterwards at Pilyony and Grodno, the former at the head of seventy, the latter of sixty-five thousand men, and immediately began to advance against the corps of Bagrathion, which lay in the opposite country; whilst Macdonald passed the Niemen at Tilsit, and, on the 2d July, Schwartzenberg crossed the frontier by passing the Bug at Moguilnica. The Emperor Alexander was at a ball at the country-house of General Benning-sen, in the neighbourhood of Wilna, when the intelligence of the passage of the river reached him. He concealed the despatches, and remained with the company till its close, without exhibiting any change of manner,² or

² Bout. i.
163. Chamb.
i. 173. Fain,
i. 168.

* "Non passa il mar d' augei sì grande stuolo,
Quando ai Soli più tepidi s' accoglie:
Nè tante vede mai l' autunno al suolo
Cader co' primi freddi aride foglie."

Gerus. Lib., ix. 66.

revealing in any way the momentous news he had received.

On the same night, however, after the festivities were over, he prepared and published the following proclamation to the nation and the army:—"For long we have observed the hostile proceedings of the French Emperor towards Russia, but we always entertained the hope of avoiding hostilities by measures of conciliation; but, seeing all our efforts without success, we have been constrained to assemble our armies. Still we hoped to maintain peace by resting on our frontiers in a defensive attitude, without committing any act of aggression. All these conciliatory measures have failed: the Emperor Napoleon, by a sudden attack on our troops at Kowno, has declared war. Seeing, therefore, that nothing can induce him to remain at peace, all that remains for us is to invoke the succour of the Most High, and oppose our forces to the enemy. I need not remind the officers and soldiers of their duty, to excite their valour; the blood of the brave Slavonians flows in their veins. Soldiers! you defend your religion, your country, and your liberty. I am with you: God is against the aggressor." The commencement of the war was likewise announced in a letter addressed to the governor of St Petersburg, which concluded with these remarkable words:—"I have the fullest confidence in the zeal of my people, and the bravery of my soldiers. Menaced in their homes, they will defend them with their wonted firmness and intrepidity. Providence will bless our just cause. The defence of our country, of our independence and national honour, have forced me to unsheath the sword. *I will not return it to the scabbard as long as a single enemy remains on the Russian territory.*"¹

The intelligence of the invasion of the French, and these moving addresses, excited the utmost enthusiasm in the people and the army. It was not mere military ardour or the passion for conquest, like that which ani-

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

3.

Proclamation of the Emperor Alexander to the Russians on the invasion. June 25, 1812.

¹ Bout. i. 163, 165. Oginski, iii. 154. Hard. x. 142.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

4.

Noble resolution of the Russian army and people. Their forces retreat on all sides.

mated the French troops ; but a deep-rooted resolution of resistance, founded on the feelings of patriotism and the spirit of devotion. Less buoyant at first, it was more powerful at last ; founded on the contempt of life, it remained unshaken by disaster, unsubdued by defeat. As the French army advanced, and the dangers of Russia increased, it augmented in strength ; and while the ardour of the invaders was quenched by the difficulties of their enterprise, the spirit of the Russians rose with the sacrifices which their situation required. It was with feelings of regret, therefore, that the Russian army received orders to retire before the enemy. This resolution had been previously taken, and all the commanders furnished with directions as to the route they were to follow. The enormous superiority of Napoleon rendered it hopeless to attempt any resistance, till time and the casualties incident to so long a march had thinned his formidable ranks. Nor was it long before the wisdom of this resolution became apparent. The sultry heat of the weather at the crossing of the Niemen, was succeeded by a tempest, the fury of which resembled the devastating hurricanes of tropical climates. Upon the countless multitudes of Napoleon, who traversed an exhausted country, covered with sterile sands or inhospitable forests, its violence fell with unmitigated severity. The horses perished by thousands, from the combined effects of incessant rain and unwholesome provender ; one hundred and twenty pieces of cannon, and five hundred caissons, were left at Wilna from want of the means of transport ; above ten thousand dead horses were found on the highway leading from the Niemen to that city alone ; thirty thousand disbanded soldiers spread desolation round the army ; and before it had been six days in the Russian territory, or a single shot had been fired, twenty-five thousand sick and dying men filled the hospitals of Wilna and the villages of Lithuania.¹

¹ Ségur, i.
147. Bout.
155, 164.
La Baume,
32. Chambr.
i. 177, 183.

When the retreat commenced, the whole Russian

armies were under the command of Alexander in person; and it was his orders which Count Barclay de Tolly, the minister at war, communicated to the different corps of the army. General Von Phull, a Prussian by birth, who had left the service of Frederick William after the disasters of 1806, and entered into that of Russia, was with the Emperor in the capacity of adviser; and it is owing to his advice that the general plan of the campaign, afterwards so admirably carried into execution by Barclay, is to be ascribed. He stood deservedly high in the Emperor's estimation, and had for several years instructed him in the general principles of the art of war. Phull was a man of genius; nay, he had many of the qualities of a great general. Along with Scharnhorst and Massenbach, he had been chief of the staff in Prussia in 1806; and he bore with him, from his wasted and conquered country, as profound a feeling of hatred to France as either of those ardent spirits. He had thoroughly studied the theory of war, and, in the seclusion of a contemplative life, had imbibed a clear sense of its principles. But he was ignorant of men, and wholly unskilled in the intrigues of a court. Constantly living with the departed great, he was not an adequate match for the existing little; familiar with Cæsar and Frederick, he knew little of the mode of managing public affairs or ruling mankind in real life. Hence he was unfit for any practical command, and held none; but nevertheless his forcible genius, romantic turn of mind, and noble disinterestedness, gave him a great sway with the Emperor, and rendered him the author of the plan, and in the outset the real commander-in-chief, of the campaign.¹

BARCLAY DE TOLLY, the war-minister who conducted the retreat from the camp at Drissa to Borodino, was one of the greatest generals and noblest characters which Russia ever produced. Descended from an old Scottish family, the Barclays of Towie in Aberdeenshire,* a

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

5.

Direction of
the Russian
army at this
period under
Von Phull.

¹ Clause-
witz, 5, 9.

6.

Birth and
early history
of Barclay
de Tolly.

* The ancient seat of that family, an old tower shrouded in stately trees, is

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

younger branch of which had migrated to Livonia, he was the son of a rural clergyman, and was born in that province in 1755. He entered the army at the early age of twelve in 1767, and without the aid either of family connexions, court influence, or turn for intrigue, succeeded, by the mere force of his mind, extent of his acquirements, and perseverance of his character, in raising himself rapidly in the service, and at length attaining the very highest rank. He was already a colonel in 1798, after thirty-one years of service, having in the course of that time served with distinction in the wars both against the Turks, the Swedes, and the Poles. His promotion after that was rapid, and he was constantly engaged in important operations. In particular, in the Polish war of 1807, he was distinguished alike for his skill at Pultusk and the heroic defence of the village of Eylau;¹ while the masculine intrepidity of his mind appeared in the daring project of crossing, with a considerable army, the gulf of Bothnia on the ice—a romantic exploit, which he accomplished in 1809 with perfect success. It contributed much to awaken that high admiration of his abilities in the Emperor, which ultimately placed him in the supreme command of the army destined to contend with Napoleon.²

¹ *Ante*, ch.
xliv. § 61.

² *Biog. Univ.*
lvii. 147.
Sup. Barclay de
Tolly.

7.
His character, and parallel with
Wellington.

Barclay was, beyond all question, one of the great generals which the era of the French Revolution produced, and certainly the greatest, after Suwarroff, of whom Russia can boast. He bears a closer resemblance than any other of the continental captains to Wellington: for in him the same daring was combined with the same caution; the same just conception with the same sagacious execution; the same singleness of heart with the

to be seen close by the high road leading from Aberdeen to Inverness, between Fyvie and Turriff. The Barclays of Towie were a very ancient Scottish family. So early as the year 1500, Patrick Gordon of Craig, who was killed at the battle of Flodden in 1513, married Rachael, daughter of Barclay de Towie, who bore him five sons. A second intermarriage between the families of Craig and Barclay took place in 1607. For this family information I am indebted to my esteemed friend, James Gordon, Esq. of Craig, in Aberdeenshire, who has the family documents in his possession.

same disinterestedness of character. We could hardly recognise the dauntless hero who vanquished Sweden by marching across the gulf of Bothnia, accompanied by heavy trains of cavalry and artillery, in the depth of winter, in the consummate general who saved Russia by his immortal retreat before Napoleon in 1812, did we not perceive the same diversity in Wellington, striking with seemingly rash but really wise daring at Assaye, and restraining the uplifted arm of retribution at Torres Vedras. He had not so much native genius as the English general, but more acquired information ; success in him was not the free gift of rapid intuition, but the deserved reward of laborious study. On the field of battle his coup-d'œil was just, his valour calm, his firmness unconquerable. But patriotism was his great virtue ; his sense of duty was such as nothing could shake. Jealousy of the command of a foreigner by descent deprived him, against the Emperor's wish, of the supreme command before the battle of Borodino, but he did not the less continue with ardent zeal to serve his country in a subordinate situation, till the taking of Paris. Envy and malice continued to heap injuries upon him, as they so often do on real greatness, down to the day of his death ; but he replied to them only by renewed services in whatever station he was placed by the Emperor, though they preyed so severely upon his heart as at length to accelerate his approach to the grave.¹

CHAP.
LXXII.
1812.

¹Biog. Univ.
lvii. 152,
153. Barclay.

Unlike his noble rival in glory, Prince PETER BAGRATION had all the advantages of rank and descent. Born in 1765, he was descended from the ancient princes of Georgia, and entered the Russian army as a sergeant in 1782, after his country had been irrevocably united by Catherine to the dominions of the Czar. He was engaged in the terrible assault of Oczakoff in 1788, and bore a distinguished part in the war of 1794 under Suwarroff in Poland. Such was the zeal and energy which he showed in the command of a body of cavalry in that

8.
Early history of Bagration.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

campaign, that Suwarroff called him "his right arm," and gave him an important appointment in Italy in 1799, where he directed the corps which gained such valuable successes against Serrurier, and at the passage of the Adda. He afterwards superintended the movements of the army, under Suwarroff, at the battle of the Trebbia, and was felt to be an officer of so much ability by that great commander, that he was almost constantly employed by him as the "general of the day," instead of devolving that duty on the other generals in rotation. Subsequently he nobly combated at Hollabrunn, during the campaign of Austerlitz, with the Russian rearguard, against the greatly superior forces of Soult and Murat, and afterwards bore a distinguished part in the battles of Eylau, Heilsberg, and Friedland, in the conquest of Finland and the war in Moldavia, which followed the peace of Tilsit.¹

¹Biog.Univ.
lvi. 59, 61,
Bagrathion.

9.
His charac-
ter.

A general trained in such a school was eminently qualified to command one of the principal armies of Russia during the French invasion. He did not possess the scientific knowledge or methodical habits which rendered Barclay so great a commander; his character and disposition led him to a different career. He was not the Fabius but the Marcellus of the war—not the shield but the sword of the empire. His love of the excitement of danger was so strong, his disposition so impetuous, that it was with the utmost difficulty he could be restrained, whenever the firing began, from hurrying to the outposts, and sharing in the duties of a common lancer or grenadier. At the battle of Borodino, after having received a severe wound, he was obliged to dismount; but he refused to leave the field, and, seating himself on an eminence in the midst of the fire, on the edge of an intrenchment which the French were assaulting with distinguished valour, exclaimed in admiration of their courage, "Bravo, Français! bravo!"² It may easily be believed that an officer endowed with so heroic a temperament was idolised by the soldiers, whom he was ever ready to lead to the

²Biog.Univ.
lvii. 61, 62,
Bagrathion.

cannon's mouth ; and his untimely end on the field of Borodino was mourned by the whole army as if they had lost a parent or a brother.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

Before leaving Wilna, Alexander made a last effort to restore peace between the two empires. On the 25th June he wrote, with his own hand, a long and eloquent letter to Napoleon, in which he declared that "if he would withdraw his forces from the Russian territory, he would forget all that had passed, and be ready to hearken to terms of accommodation." This letter was despatched by M. Batachof ; but Napoleon was so much irritated at the proposal to retire behind the Niemen, that it led to nothing.

10.
Napoleon enters Wilna, and remains there seventeen days. June 28.

"I will treat of peace," said he, "at Wilna, and retire behind the Niemen when it is concluded." Hostilities accordingly continued. Barclay, with the principal Russian army, left Wilna on the 28th of June, and on the same day Napoleon entered it. He remained there for seventeen days ; a delay which military historians have pronounced the greatest fault in his whole life. It is certain that it gave time to the Russian commanders to retire in admirable order, and exhibits a striking contrast to the rapidity with which he pursued his broken enemy after the battle of Jena, or the combats of Ratisbon and Echmühl. Already the extraordinary consumption of human life in the campaign had become apparent ; for as the Emperor reviewed the troops at Wilna, they were almost struck down by the pestilential smell which the westerly wind blew from the long line of carcasses of horses and bodies of men which lay unburied on the road from Kowno.¹ But on the other hand, it is to be recollected that Lithuania afforded none of the resources for a victorious army which the opulent and cultivated plains of Saxony or Bavaria presented. Vast forests of pine, or desert heaths and sands, offered no resources for the troops. Contrary to what obtains in the old civilised states of western Europe, the vicinity of the highways was hardly more peopled or better cultivated than the unfrequented dis-

¹ Dumas, Souv. iii. 426.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ Bout. i.
172. Jom. iv.
72. Chamb.
i. 187. Bign.
x. 498.

tricts ; and if the army outstripped the convoys which accompanied it, the soldiers would have perished of want, or the military array been dissolved by the necessity of separating for the purpose of marauding and pillage. The unparalleled magnitude of his present forces necessarily impeded the Emperor's movements ; and he felt that if he advanced without due precaution into so sterile a region, he ran the risk of perishing, like Darius, from the multitude of mouths which he had to feed.¹

11.
Enthusiasm
of the Poles
on that
event.

The ancient and unforgotten patriotism of the Poles burst forth without control for some days after the occupation of Wilna. Napoleon entered that city at the head of the Polish regiment commanded by Prince Radzivil, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants, who regarded him as their liberator. The national banners were raised to the sounds of military music and the acclamations of multitudes ; the young embraced and wept in the public streets ; the aged brought forth the ancient Polish dress, which had almost been forgotten during the days of their humiliation. The Diet of Warsaw declared the kingdom of Poland re-established, convoked the national diets, invited all the Poles to unite together, and called upon those in the Russian service to abandon their standards. The Emperor took some steps at first, calculated to favour the hope that a national restoration was in contemplation. The few days given at Wilna to the repose of the army, were devoted to the organisation of a provisional government extending over all Lithuania. The country was divided into four governments ; and prefects, mayors, and assistants, were elected as in the French empire. Six regiments of infantry, and one of cavalry, were directed to be raised, one of which formed part of Napoleon's Guard ; and the constant presence of Maret, his minister for foreign affairs, whose anxiety for the restoration of Poland was so well known, in all his diplomatic labours, inspired the general hope that some decisive measure for the reversal of the great act of injustice under

which it had suffered was in contemplation. The enthusiasm being universal, the men raised were very numerous ; and if roused to effort by a more generous policy, might have produced the most important effects. As it was, the auxiliary force they brought forward was by no means inconsiderable. Altogether, the Poles furnished to Napoleon, in the course of the campaign, no less than eighty-five thousand men.¹

CHAP.

LXXII.

1812.

¹ Ségur, i.
153, 154,
158. Oginski, iv. 5.
Fain, i. 181,
183.

The first address of the Polish Diet to the Emperor was signally characteristic of the profound feelings of underserved injury by which that gallant nation were animated. —“ Why have we been effaced from the map of Europe ? By what right have we been attacked, invaded, dismembered ? What have been our crimes, who our judges ? Russia is the author of all our woes. Need we refer to that execrable day when, in the midst of the shouts of a ferocious conqueror, Warsaw heard the last groans of the population of Praga, which perished entire by fire or sword ? These are the titles of Russia to Poland ; force has forged them, force can alone burst their fetters. Frontiers traced by a spoliating hand can never extinguish our common origin, or destroy our common rights. Yes ! we are still Poles ! The day of our restoration has arrived : the land of the Jagellons and the Sobieskis is to resume all its glory.” The clergy were next admonished to solicit the divine protection ; and an address was published to the Lithuanians in the Russian army, calling upon them to range themselves under the banners of their country. But though Napoleon was not insensible to the advantages which the co-operation of the Lithuanians offered him, yet political considerations of insurmountable weight prevented him from taking that decisive step in favour of the restoration of Poland, by which alone its independence, in the midst of so many powerful neighbours, could be effected ; viz., the reunion of all its partitioned provinces under one head.² He was well aware of the ardent but unsteady and factious character of the Poles, and deemed

12.

Address of
the Polish
Diet to the
Emperor.

² Chamb. i.
195. Fain,
i. 181.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

13.
His views
on the sub-
ject, and
reply.

the aid of their tumultuous democracy dearly purchased, if the friendship of Austria or Prussia, his present firm allies, were endangered in its acquisition.

He replied, therefore, to the address of the Polish Diet, —“ I approve of your efforts, and authorise you to continue them. I will do all in my power to second your resolutions. If you are unanimous, you may indulge the hope of compelling the enemy to recognise your rights ; but in these remote and widely-extended countries, it is solely in the unanimity of the efforts of the population that you can find hopes of establishing it. Let Lithuania, Samogitia, Volhynia, Podolia, and the Ukraine, be animated by the same spirit which I have witnessed in the grand-duchy of Warsaw, and Providence will crown your efforts with success. I must at the same time inform you, that I have guaranteed the integrity of the Austrian dominions, and *can sanction no movement which may endanger the peaceable possession of her Polish provinces.*” These words froze every heart with horror. It was evident that he was willing enough to disturb Russia by a revolt in her Lithuanian dominions, but had no inclination to embroil himself with Austria or Prussia by a general reunion of the Polish provinces ; and without that, it was universally felt the restoration of the kingdom would prove an illusory dream. The provincial government which he had established did not possess the confidence of the nation ; no guarantee for the restoration of the monarchy was given ; distrust and dissatisfaction succeeded to the transports of inconsiderate joy ; and Napoleon, by yielding to the dictates of a cautious policy, lost the support of a gallant people.¹

¹ Ségur, i.
153, 158.
Oginski,
iii. 274.
Chamb. i.
195, 196.
Fain, i. 183,
185.

14.
Movements
of Jerome
against Ba-
grathion.

While Napoleon, with the main body of his army, moved upon Wilna, Jerome and Davoust advanced against Bagrathion, who was forced to fall back by an eccentric line of retreat towards Bobrinsk. The rapidity of the advance of the French centre cut off the communication between the two Russian armies ; and by pushing back

Barclay five days before the position of Bagrathion was disturbed, he hoped to repeat the oblique attack on a great scale which had proved so fatal to the Austrians at Lissa, in the wars of the great Frederick. Bagrathion, in consequence, retired : but, finding that his advanced posts, in consequence of the oblique advance of the French centre, encountered the corps of Davoust, whom Napoleon had detached from the Grand Army to prevent his rejoining the Russian centre, he was obliged to make several detours ; and in the course of one of these, his cavalry, July 9. consisting chiefly of Cossacks, encountered at Mir the advanced guard of Jerome's army, composed of three regiments of Polish cavalry. A sharp action ensued, which ended favourably to the Russians ; and the day following July 10. a still more serious combat took place between six Polish regiments and the Cossack cavalry, which also terminated in the repulse of the invaders. These brilliant affairs, which were the first engagements of the campaign, produced the utmost enthusiasm in the Russian army ; but Bagrathion, wisely judging that even a total defeat of Jerome's army, by drawing him farther from the interior, would only enable Davoust to interpose between his army and the retiring columns of Barclay, continued his retreat by Nesvige, and reached in safety the ramparts of Bobrinsk on the Beresina, on the 18th July.¹

The object of Napoleon in these movements was to separate entirely Bagrathion from Barclay de Tolly, and enclose the former between Jerome's army, which pressed his rear, and Davoust's corps, which was destined to fall perpendicularly on his flank. If that had become impossible, he was directed to occupy the termination of the roads by which the Russian general was retiring, with a view to regain by cross-roads the intrenched camp of Drissa, where the whole army was ordered to rendezvous. But the rapidity and skill of the Russian movements, joined to the inexplicable tardiness of Jerome's pursuit, having rendered this well-conceived design abortive, the

¹ Bout. i. 190, 228.
Jomini, iv. 66. Chamb. i. 199, 200.
Fain, i. 208, 213, 216.

15.
Their ill success, and consequent displeasure of Napoleon. Combat of Mohilow.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

July 23.

Emperor deprived his brother, with bitter reproaches, of his command, and placed the corps of Junot and Poniatowski under the orders of Davoust.* This change did not improve the success of the movements for the capture of Bagrathion. Davoust reached Minsk on the 8th, and on the 12th resumed his march for Mohilow on the Dnieper. Both armies advanced with expedition to occupy Mohilow, which commanded the entrance of the defiles by which the cross movement towards Barclay was to be effected; but in spite of the utmost diligence of the Russians, they found it already in the hands of Davoust, who defended its approaches with thirty thousand men, and had adopted every imaginable precaution to secure it from attack. On the 23d July, Bagrathion pushed forward General Raefskoi with twenty thousand men to attack the French position, which was extremely strong, in the defiles of a forest which was filled with artillery and tirailleurs. An obstinate conflict ensued, in which the Russians displayed their characteristic intrepidity in sustaining unmoved for hours, at the entrance of the defile, the most terrible fire of musketry and grape-shot; but being unable to force the French from their strong ground, Bagrathion wisely commenced a retreat, which was conducted in admirable order, and with little molestation. The loss on both sides was nearly equal, consisting of somewhat above three thousand men on the Russian, and three thousand two hundred on the French part.¹

The junction of Count Platoff† with a large body of

¹ Jom. iv.
76, 77.
Bout. i.
236, 237.
Chamb. i.
273, 279.

* "I am extremely displeased at the King of Westphalia (Jerome) for not having sent his light troops in pursuit of the enemy under Bagrathion. It is impossible to manœuvre worse than he has done. Had Poniatowski only a single division, he should have been sent forward on that duty; whereas, in fact, he had his whole corps. By thus forgetting all rules, as well as his express instructions, Bagrathion has gained time to make his retreat with perfect leisure. The whole fruit of my manœuvres, and the finest opportunity of the war, has been lost by his singular forgetfulness of the first principles of the military art."—FAIN, i. 230.

† Platoff, headman or "hetman" of the Cossacks of the Don, and who bore a distinguished part in almost every battle from the opening of the war on the

Cossacks of the Don, having raised Bagrathion's army on the following day to fifty-five thousand men, he might, without difficulty, have forced Davoust from his position, and continued his movement by Mohilow, as Davoust had not more than thirty-four thousand to oppose him. But the favourable position of the French army, which communicated by an interior line with the centre under Napoleon, rendering that a hazardous operation, he prudently retired to Nov-Bichow, from whence he crossed the Dnieper, and leisurely advanced by Mestislau to Smolensko, where, as will hereafter appear, he joined the main army under Barclay on the 3d August. Davoust, intimidated by the severity of the combat at Mohilow, did not venture to follow his rival across that deep and marshy river; and thus the whole measures of the French for the separation or capture of Bagrathion's forces, though conducted by two armies, each of which was as numerous as his own, ultimately proved abortive.¹

Meanwhile, the main Russian army, after leaving Wilna under Barclay, retired to the intrenched camp of Drissa,

Niemen to its termination at Paris, was born on the banks of the Don in the year 1763, so that, at the commencement of the war of 1812, he was nearly fifty years of age. He early entered into the army, and commanded the Cossacks in the bloody Polish campaigns of 1806-7, and in the subsequent campaigns against the Turks in 1809-10. Though by this time arrived at the period of life when the activity of youth has generally cooled down into the more sober caution of age, yet he retained undiminished the activity and fire of his earlier years; and he was always ready, at any hour of the day or night, to set out with his indefatigable Cossacks, and either march any distance in pursuit of the enemy, or engage in any attack, how hazardous soever, upon their forces. Enduring of fatigue, hardy in habit, unaccustomed to luxury, he slept with equal ease on the damp ground or the snow, covered with his cloak, and with his saddle for his pillow, as on a bed of down, and in the palaces of princes. The activity which his example communicated to the hardy children of the desert was such, that in course of the campaign they became the most formidable enemies of the French, and did the invading army more mischief than the *élite* of the Russian Guard. Platoff had a commanding figure, being six feet four inches in height; he was distinguished by a benevolent expression of countenance, and possessed all the affability of manner and joviality of disposition which endears a chief to rude nations. He took little pains to prevent his followers from plundering, and they accordingly carried off, without mercy, whatever they could stuff under their saddles; but deeds of unnecessary cruelty always met with his reprobation, and, when detected, were severely

CHAP.

LXXII.

1812.

16.

Bagrathion
effects his
retreat to
Smolensko.¹ *Jom. iv.**76, 77.**Bout. i.**238, 239.*

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

17.

Retreat of
the Russian
main army
to the in-
trenched
camp at
Drissa, and
description
of it.

on the river Dwina. The Emperor on the 8th July, being the anniversary of the battle of Pultowa, published an energetic address to his soldiers, who were somewhat discouraged by their long retreat before the enemy.* This camp, intrenched with the utmost care, and capable of containing a hundred thousand men, had been selected and fortified long before as a favourable position for covering the road to St Petersburg. It was defended by ten redoubts and three hundred and fifty-four pieces of cannon. Although the camp at Drissa has not attained such celebrity as the vast labour exerted on it might have led one to anticipate, yet it was one of the greatest military constructions of modern times. The Russians had been labouring at it assiduously for above two years, in the firm belief that, from its situation, it would, if held by a large army, render the advance of any hostile army either towards St Petersburg or Moscow impossible, and that itself, by art, might be rendered impregnable. The outer circle of the works was formed of a line of embasures for musketry. Fifty paces behind them was a line of fieldworks alternately open and close: the former

punished. Such was his influence with his countrymen on the Don, that the whole men capable of bearing arms in the nation would have willingly turned out at his request; and it was very much owing to this cause, that the formidable reinforcement of two-and-twenty regiments of these nomad warriors joined the Russian army after the burning of Moscow, and made the scales of war, then hanging nearly even, turn decisively against the French Emperor. The author had the happiness of forming an acquaintance with this distinguished warrior at Paris in 1814, and many of the anecdotes of this and the succeeding campaign were received from him and his officers.¹

¹ Biog. Univ.
xxxv. 37, 38,
Platoff.

* "Soldiers! When the enemy dared to cross our frontiers, we were so much scattered, that it was necessary to retire in order to effect the reunion of the troops. Now this is effected. The whole of the first army is here assembled: the field of battle is open to your valour;—so docile to rule, so ardent to maintain the reputation which your valour has acquired, you are about to gain laurels worthy of yourselves and of your ancestors. The remembrance of your valour, the éclat of your renown, engage you to surpass yourselves by the glory of your actions. The foes of your country have already experienced the weight of your arms. Go on, then, in the spirit of your fathers, and destroy the enemy who has dared to attack your religion and national honour even in your homes, in the midst of your wives and children. God, who is the witness of the justice of our cause, will sanctify your arms by His divine benediction."—CHAMBRAY, i. 215.

being intended for the batteries, the latter for single battalions stationed under cover of the batteries. Two hundred paces behind this line of works was an interior range, entirely shut in, and bristling with cannon ; in the centre was a still stronger intrenchment, intended either to serve as a refuge in case of disaster or a support in the event of retreat. Though this fortification was evidently complicated and artificial, yet it was strong ; and as it was mounted with four hundred pieces of cannon, and defended by so resolute a body of men as the Russian army, it may be doubted whether by any direct attack, even with his gigantic forces, Napoleon could have forced it. But the ground was sandy ; no devices for strengthening the external works by palisades, felled trees, &c., had been resorted to ; of the seven bridges destined for the retreat of the army in rear, not one had yet been constructed ; and, above all, the whole camp was liable to be turned by the right bank of the Dwina, where there was no fortress whatever. The little town of Drissa, also, which lay opposite the left wing, was destitute of any support ; and the long wooden sheds, in which enormous quantities of provisions, chiefly flour, had been accumulated, were without cover, and liable to be easily set on fire by a shower of howitzers. It was these defects which caused the camp ultimately to be abandoned without any contest, after immense sums had been employed in its construction.¹

The weakness of the position from these causes was soon apparent. Strong as this intrenched camp was, it became useless, and even perilous, when Napoleon, moving the mass of his forces towards his right, threatened not only to advance in the direction of Moscow, but to throw the Russian army towards Livonia and the sea, and sever it from its communication with the heart of the empire. To avoid such a catastrophe, and at the same time facilitate the long wished-for junction with Bagration, who, since his repulse at Mohilev, had been driven

CHAP.
LXXXII.

1812.

¹ Clausewitz, Feldzug von 1812, 22, 23.18.
Barclay evacuates it, and retires to Witepsk.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

July 14.

¹ Bout. i.
180, 198,
199. Chamb.
i. 213, 217.
Fain, i. 274,
275.

to the circuitous route of Nov-Bichow and Mestislav, with a view to join Barclay at Witepsk or Smolensko, the general-in-chief resolved to evacuate this stronghold, and retire by the right bank of the Dwina to Witepsk. On the 14th July, Barclay broke up from his intrenchments; and on the 16th, the headquarters were established at Polotsk, where the Emperor quitted the army and hastened to Moscow, to stimulate by his presence the patriotic efforts of that important capital, which was evidently about to become the principal object of the efforts of the enemy. He left the chief command in the hands of Barclay de Tolly, who, though admirably qualified for the duty, was obnoxious to the army on account of his foreign descent, and received little cordial support from the native Russian generals under his orders.¹

19.
Napoleon
advances to
the Dwina.

On the 16th July, Napoleon moved from Wilna, and advanced with nearly two hundred thousand men by his own right, in the direction of Witepsk, so as to turn the camp at Drissa. Finding it evacuated at his approach, he halted for six days at Glubokoe; and on the 22d continued his movement towards Witepsk, and reached the Dwina on the 24th at Bechenchowiczi. Barclay, perceiving that he was throwing the mass of his forces on the right towards Witepsk, resolved to anticipate him in his march to that place, in order to preserve his own communication with Smolensko, where he expected to effect his junction with Bagrathion. In consequence, the Russian headquarters were advanced with great rapidity to Witepsk on the 23d, and a large part of the army was crossed over to the left bank of the stream—a perilous operation, which exposed the troops to the dangers which had been so severely experienced, when a similar movement was made to the left of the Niemen in presence of the enemy at Friedland. The delay of Napoleon at Glubokoe, however, preserved the Russian army from a similar disaster.² His advanced posts did not reach

² Chamb. i.
221, 225.
Fain, i. 273.
Ségur, i.
194. Bout.
i. 211, 214.

Ostrowno till the 25th, by which time Barclay had assembled all his forces, eighty thousand strong, on the left bank, in the neighbourhood of Witepsk; and the vanguard, consisting of twelve thousand men, was strongly posted under Ostermann on the wooded heights which adjoin the former town.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

No movement in the campaign was of more vital importance to the Russians than this advance upon Witepsk; and if Napoleon had not delayed six days, apparently without a cause, at Glubokoe, he could with ease have anticipated the enemy at that important point; permanently interposed the bulk of his forces between Barclay and Bagrathion; and, throwing back the former towards St Petersburg, and the latter on Smolensko and Moscow, have cut off the former from the southern provinces and principal resources of the empire. It is impossible to over-estimate the results which might have ensued from such a movement. It would probably have entirely altered the fate of the campaign. The forces assembled by the French Emperor at this decisive point were immense, and their march was regulated with that extraordinary accuracy and nice calculation of time, which have justly rendered his campaigns the admiration of the world. Nor was the execution of these by the troops inferior to the genius by which they had been conceived. With such precision had the orders of Napoleon been obeyed, that the whole corps of the army which he commanded in person reached the rendezvous on the Dwina at the same hour, though their march had begun a hundred leagues in the rear from the banks of the Niemen. The assemblage of one hundred and eighty thousand men at the same point, produced for some time inevitable confusion; but by degrees the different corps defiled to the separate posts assigned to them; and before midnight silence reigned in the midst of that vast array.¹

20.
Vast importance of this movement on Witepsk; and arrival of Napoleon in front of that place.

1 Bout. i.
211, 215.
Jom. iv. 72,
73. Fain, i.
273. Ségur,
i. 194, 195.
Chamb. i.
221, 227.

On the 25th and 26th, Murat, at the head of ten thou-

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

21.

Position of
the Rus-
sians, and
force which
Barclay had
collected
there.
July 26.

sand horse and two thousand light troops, the advanced guard of the French, attacked Count Ostermann near Ostrowno, and several severe actions ensued, in the course of which he charged in person at the head of the Polish lancers. The Russian infantry, strongly posted in the thick woods with which the country abounded, arrested by a heavy fire the advance of the French cavalry; and many charges were made on both sides with various success, and without any decisive effect. During the delay occasioned by these actions, both parties brought up the main body of their forces; and on the morning of the 27th, the whole Russian army, eighty-two thousand strong, was to be seen posted on an elevated plain which covered the approaches to Witepsk. Their superb cavalry, amounting to above ten thousand horsemen, were stationed in double lines in front of the right of the position; the infantry in the centre, behind the deep bed of the Leizipa; and a magnificent array of artillery occupied the left on a series of wooded eminences. Napoleon, at the head of a hundred and eighty thousand men, made every preparation for an attack on the following day. Several severe skirmishes between the advanced guards, in presence of their respective armies, fought with alternate success, elevated the hopes of the contending parties; and the soldiers on both sides sharpened their weapons, and prepared for a mortal struggle on the following day. Napoleon's last words to Murat at nightfall were, "To-morrow at five, the sun of Austerlitz!"¹

¹ Ségur, i.
200, 204,
205. Bout.
i. 218, 220.
Fain, i. 279,
282, Chamb.
i. 229, 231.

22.

Intelligence
from Bagra-
thion in-
duces him
to retreat
to Smolen-
sko. Ad-
mirable
order of the
retreat.

In truth, the Russian general, notwithstanding the vast disproportion of numbers, had taken the bold resolution of giving battle on the following day, in order to avoid the danger of being attacked by the French while defiling by a flank movement in the direction of Orcha, where he had appointed Bagrathion to meet him. But during the night intelligence was received, which fortunately induced him to change his determination. It

appeared, from letters brought by one of his aides-de-camp, that Bagrathion having been arrested by Davoust at Mohilev, and being unable, in consequence, to continue his march to Orcha, had crossed the Dnieper, and was moving towards Smolensko. Barclay immediately resolved to discontinue his intended flank movement towards Orcha, and, abandoning Witepsk, to effect his junction in the neighbourhood of that renowned bulwark of the Russian empire. Brilliant watch-fires were kept up in the Russian lines during the night, to induce the belief that they were resolved to give battle; but meanwhile the whole army broke up from its encampment, and the important and perilous duty of protecting the rear was intrusted to Count Pahlen. Early on the morning of the 28th, Murat, who had bivouacked with the advanced posts, approached the enemy's station, but found their camp entirely deserted. With such skill had the retreat been conducted, that not a weapon, not a baggage-waggon, not a straggler, had been left behind.* Following on the traces of the enemy, the advanced guard was unable, at the separation of the two roads of St Petersburg and Moscow, to ascertain which their opponents had followed! The French officers beheld with astonishment the science and discipline of their enemies, and were obliged to acknowledge with shame, that there was more order in the Russian retreating than in their own advancing columns.¹

The Viceroy at length discovered the Russian rearguard slowly retiring in admirable order over the plain towards Smolensko. Some charges executed against it by the French chasseurs were not only repulsed, but the assailants destroyed. The exhausted state of the horses rendered it impossible for the cavalry to act with effect, and the retreating riders could only save their attenuated

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

July 28.
¹ Ségur, i.
209. Bout.
i. 220, 224.
Fain, i. 286,
287. Chamb.
i. 237.

23.
Advance of
the French
to Witepsk,
and reasons
for their
halt there.

* " 'Twould seem as if their mother earth
Had swallowed up her warlike birth."

SCOTT'S *Lady of the Lake*.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

steeds by leading them by the bridles, walking by their sides. The rays of a powerful sun overwhelmed the soldiers, and everything conspired to indicate the necessity of repose. In truth, the losses of the army during their long march had been such, that a halt could no longer be dispensed with. Napoleon had accomplished the advance from Kowno and Grodno to Witepsk, without magazines or convoys, in little more than thirty days ; whereas Charles XII. had taken eight months to traverse the same space, with the whole stores of the army accompanying its columns. From the want of magazines, and the impossibility of conveying an adequate supply of provisions for so immense a host, disorders of every kind had accumulated in a frightful manner on the flanks and rear of the army. Neither bread nor spirits were to be had ; the flesh of overdriven animals and bad water constituted the sole subsistence of the soldiers ; the burning sun during the day, and cold dews at night, multiplied dysenteries to an extraordinary degree. Pillage was universal : the necessities of the soldiery burst through all the restraints of discipline ; and a crowd of stragglers and marauders on all sides, now swelled to above thirty thousand, both seriously diminished the strength and impaired the character of the army. Napoleon yielded to the necessities of his situation : the headquarters were established at Witepsk, and his numerous corps cantoned in the vicinity of the Dwina and the Borysthenes ; while the Russian army, no longer molested in its retreat, slowly retired to Smolensko, where Bagrathion was awaiting its approach.¹

¹ Bout. i.
223, 225.
Ségur, i.
210. Chamb.
i. 241, 243.

24.
Immense
difficulty
experienced
in providing
subsistence
for the in-
vading
army.

Already it had become apparent that a difficulty was to be encountered in this war, to which Napoleon in all his former invasions had been a stranger. Pillage and disorders are always the inseparable concomitants of the assemblage of large bodies of men, and were far from being unknown in his previous campaigns ; but on these occasions they had been the accompaniment only of the

advancing columns ; order and discipline were soon established in the rear ; and when the troops went into quarters, and received their rations regularly, they were maintained with almost as little difficulty as in their own country. But in the Russian war, when disorders once commenced, they never ceased ; and, whatever discipline the Emperor established in the immediate vicinity of his own headquarters, the whole lines of communication in the rear were filled with stragglers, and presented a scene of pillage, confusion, and suffering. Napoleon was perfectly aware of the existence of these disorders ; and was not only severe in his censure to his lieutenants for permitting their existence, but indefatigable in his own efforts to arrest them. Yet it was all in vain : the evil went on continually increasing to the close of the campaign, and proved one great cause of the disasters in which it terminated. The reason was, that the expedition was conducted on a scale which exceeded the bounds of human strength, and had to combat with difficulties which were only augmented by the multitude who were assembled to insure its success.¹

Russia differed essentially from all the countries, with the exception of Spain, in which the French had hitherto carried on war. It has neither the navigable rivers which in Germany, Italy, or the Low Countries, serve as so many arteries to distribute subsistence and resources through the mass of an army ; nor the rich fields and far-spread ancient cultivation, which in their fertile plains so often had enabled the Emperor to dispense with the formation of magazines and the encumbrance of convoys, and plunge, regardless of his flanks and rear, into the heart of his adversary's territory. The roads in many places traverse immense forests, where no human habitations are to be seen for leagues together ; and often for a whole day's journey, a few wretched hamlets alone break the gloomy monotony of the wilderness. No distributions of provisions to the soldiers, no efforts made

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ Chamb. i.
244, 247,
See Napoleon to Ber-
thier, July
10, 1812.
Fain, i. 243 ;
and Dumas'
Report,
Aug. 12,
1812. Cham-
bray, i. 376.

25.
Causes to
which it
was owing.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ Clause-
witz, 16, 17.
Chamb. i.
246, 248.

to procure convoys, could for weeks together furnish subsistence to several hundred thousand men and horses, while traversing such a country. It was from the very outset of the campaign, in consequence, found necessary to reduce the rations served out to the soldiers to one-half; and the pittance thus obtained was inadequate to the support of men undergoing the fatigue which their long marches imposed upon the troops. Pillage thus became, from the very outset, unavoidable; and though it added little to the resources of the soldiers, it fatally relaxed their discipline, and augmented, to an enormous degree, the number of stragglers, many of whom never rejoined their ranks.¹

26.
Deplorable
condition of
the corps in
rear of the
army.

Scanty as the supplies were, they were in general denied to the detachments or convalescents coming up in the rear, who, finding the magazines emptied by the enormous multitude who had passed before them, were in general sent on without anything, to find subsistence as they best could, in a country often desert, always wasted by the passage of the corps which were then on the march. Pillage, and the dispersion of the troops for several leagues on either side of the high-roads in quest of subsistence, became thus a matter of necessity; no order or discipline could prevent it. A large proportion of the stragglers who thus inundated the country never rejoined their colours, or were only collected in confused multitudes by the light columns organised by the Emperor to arrest the disorders; and before a great part of the army had ever seen the enemy, it had already undergone a loss greater than might have been expected in the most bloody campaign. It was weakened, when the stragglers and sick were added to the killed and wounded, by the enormous number of a hundred thousand men before they reached Witepsk.²

² Clause-
witz, 16, 17.
Chamb. i.
246, 250.

While these movements were taking place in the armies, the Emperor Alexander had hastened to Moscow, to accelerate by his presence the armaments in the interior of the

empire. By an edict dated from the camp of Drissa, the 12th July, he had already ordered a new levy of one in one hundred in the provinces nearest to the seat of war ; but this supply not being deemed sufficient, a proclamation, couched in the most energetic language, was addressed a few days afterwards from Polotsk to the inhabitants of Moscow :—" Never," said he, " was danger more urgent. The national religion, the throne, the state, can be preserved only by the greatest sacrifices. May the hearts of our illustrious nobles and people be filled with the spirit of true valour ; and may God bless the righteous cause ! May this holy spirit, emanating from Moscow, spread to the extremities of the empire ! May the destruction with which we are menaced recoil upon the head of the invader, and may Europe, freed from the yoke of servitude, have cause to bless the name of Russia ?"¹

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

27.
The Emperor Alexander repairs to Moscow, to hasten the armaments there.
July 12.

¹ Bout. i.
199, 201.

A similar address was on the 18th published to the whole Russian people :—" The enemy has crossed our frontiers, and penetrated into the interior of Russia. Unable by treachery to overturn an empire which has grown with the growth of ages, he now endeavours to overturn it with the accumulated forces of Europe. Perfidy in his heart, honour on his lips, he seeks to seduce the credulous ears, and enchain the manly arms ; and if the captive hardly perceives at first his chains under the flowers in which they are hid, tyranny ere long discloses itself in all its odious colours. But Russia has penetrated his views ! The path of duty lies before her ; she has invoked the protection of the Most High. She opposes to the machinations of the enemy an army undaunted in courage, which burns with the desire to chase the enemy from its country ; to destroy those locusts who appear to overload the earth, but whom the earth will reject from its bosom, and deny even the rites of sepulture. We demand forces proportioned to such an object ; and that object is, the destruction of a

28.
Proclamation to the nation.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

tyrant who oppresses the universe. Great as is the valour of our troops, they have need of reinforcements in the interior to sustain their efforts. We have called on our ancient metropolis of Moscow to give the first example of this heroic devotion. We address the same appeal to all our subjects in Europe or Asia, and to all communities and religions. We invite all classes to a general armament, in order to co-operate with ourselves against the designs of the enemy. Let him find at every step the faithful sons of Russia ready to combat all his forces, and deaf to all his seductions ; despising his fraud, trampling under foot his gold, paralysing by the heroism of true valour all the efforts of his legions of slaves. In every noble may he find a Posankoi, in every ecclesiastic a Palistyn, in every citizen a Menin.* Illustrious nobles ! in every age you have been the saviours of your country ; holy clergy ! by your prayers you have always invoked the Divine blessing on the arms of Russia ; people ! worthy descendants of the brave Slavonians, often have you broken the jaws of the lions which were open to devour you ! Unite then, with the cross in your hearts and the sword in your hands, and no human power shall prevail against you.”¹

¹ Bout. i.
204. Cham.
i. 370, 371.
Fain, i. 316,
317.

29.
Generous
and patriotic
devotion of
the inhabi-
tants of
Moscow.
July 27.

While the minds of all ranks were in the highest state of excitement from these proclamations, and a sense of the crisis which awaited their country, the Emperor arrived in Moscow from the army. On the 27th July the nobles and the merchants were invited to a solemn assembly at the imperial palace. Count Rostopchin, the governor of Moscow, then read the Emperor’s address, and invited all the nobles to contribute to the defence of their country. A levy of ten in one hundred of the male population was immediately proposed and *unanimously* adopted ; and they further agreed to clothe and arm them at their own expense. It was calculated that if the

* Patriots celebrated in Russian history.

other parts of the empire followed this example, which they immediately did, it would produce five hundred thousand warriors. Nor did the assembly of merchants evince less zeal in the public service: a contribution proportioned to the capital of each was instantly agreed to; a voluntary additional subscription was further opened, and in less than an hour the sum subscribed exceeded £180,000. While all hearts were touched by these splendid efforts, the Emperor appeared in the assembly, and after openly explaining the dangers of the state, declared, amidst a transport of general enthusiasm, that he would exhaust his last resources before giving up the contest. "The disasters," said he, "with which you are menaced, should be considered as the means necessary to complete the ruin of the enemy." History affords few examples of so generous a confidence on the part of the sovereign, and such devoted patriotism on the part of his subjects. By these means a powerful auxiliary force was created in the interior, destined to fill up the chasm in the regular army. The example of Moscow was speedily followed by the other cities and provinces in the centre of the empire; and the patriotic levies thus-formed powerfully contributed to the final success of the campaign. Having taken these energetic measures, the Emperor set out for St Petersburg, where he arrived on the 15th August; and, by an edict published on the 16th, an additional levy was ordered in all the provinces not actually the seat of war.¹

These proclamations, and some rumours of the extensive preparations going forward in the interior, speedily reached the French headquarters, where they excited no small astonishment. The religious strain of the addresses especially, and the repeated appeals to the protection of Heaven, were the subject of unbounded ridicule among the gay and thoughtless officers of the grand army. Not so, however, with Napoleon. He received with equal surprise, but very different feelings from those of con-

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

Aug. 15.
¹ Fain, i.
 313. Guil-
 laume de
 Vaudon-
 court, 106.
 Bout. i. 205,
 210.

30.
 Opinion of
 Napoleon on
 these pro-
 clamations.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

tempt, the report of these energetic efforts to give a devotional character to the contest. Again and again he caused the proclamations, and the still more impassioned addresses of the metropolitan Archbishop of Moscow to the clergy of the empire, to be read to him; and long did he muse on their contents. "What," said he, "can have wrought such a change in the Emperor Alexander? Whence has sprung all this venom which he has infused into the quarrel? Now there is nothing but the force of arms which can terminate the contest: war alone can put a period to war. It was to avoid such a necessity that I was so careful, at the outset of the contest, not to implicate myself by any declarations in favour of the re-establishment of Poland; now I see my moderation was a fault."¹

¹ Fain, i.
317, 318.

31.
First opera-
tions of
Count Witt-
genstein on
the Dwina,
in which
the French
are defeated.
July 31.

While the centre of the French army thus advanced to Witepsk, and Barclay retired to Smolensko, Count WITTGENSTEIN,* with twenty-five thousand men, was detached from the army of the latter, in order to retain a position upon the Dwina, and cover the road to St Petersburg. Oudinot was opposed to him by Napoleon; and he occupied Polotsk with twenty-seven thousand excellent soldiers. On the 30th July he advanced against the Russian general, and a severe action ensued on the following day. The Russian vanguard, under Kutusoff, in the first instance imprudently crossed the Drissa, and was driven back with the loss of a thousand men; but the French under Verdier, hurried on by the eagerness of the pursuit, committed the same fault, and

* Wittgenstein was at this period forty years of age, having been born in 1772. A German by birth, he had early entered the Russian service, and had risen by his energy and perseverance to the high command which he now enjoyed. He was brave, active, and persevering; full of energy, and indefatigable in his habits. No man exceeded him in patriotic spirit, or enthusiastic devotion to the service. Without the first qualities of a great general, at least when at the head of very large armies, he was admirably qualified for the subordinate part with which he was now intrusted, of covering St Petersburg, and compensating, by his obstinacy and perseverance in resisting the attacks of the French marshals, the decided superiority of their numbers.—See CLAUSEWITZ, 203.

brought on a general action, in which the Russians, after a long and bloody struggle, were victorious. Oudinot, weakened by the loss of four thousand men, retired across the Drissa, and took shelter under the walls of Polotsk, where, as mentioned below, he was shortly after joined by St-Cyr, at the head of twelve thousand Bavarians, which raised his army, notwithstanding its losses, to thirty-five thousand men.¹

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ Jom. iv.
80, 81. Bout.
i. 201, 209.
Fain, i. 297.
Chamb. i.
265.

Napoleon was no sooner informed of this check on the Drissa, than he gave vent to severe invectives against Oudinot, who, he insisted, was superior in force to the enemy, and, instead of awaiting an attack, should have taken the initiative, and assumed a victorious attitude towards the enemy. Stung to the quick by these reproaches, which he was conscious were by no means deserved, the brave marshal obeyed his orders and advanced against his antagonist; while the Emperor, who felt the full importance, during his advance into the interior, of preserving his left flank on the Dwina secure, ordered up St-Cyr with his corps of Bavarians, who were estimated at twenty-two thousand men, but who had already wasted away to half that number, by forced marches to Polotsk; and he arrived there on the 6th August. Alexander, on his side, who was not less interested in the operations of a corps which at once covered the road to St Petersburg and menaced the communications of the French army, ordered up powerful reinforcements, sixteen thousand strong, under Count Steinheil, who had been stationed in Finland, but were now rendered disposable by the conclusion of the treaty with Sweden, to the same destination; and the militia of St Petersburg also received orders to advance to his support. Thus everything announced that the war on the Dwina would become of great, if not decisive importance, before the close of the campaign.²

32.
Napoleon
reproaches
Oudinot,
and orders
up St-Cyr.

Aug. 6.
² Chamb. i.
265, 267.
Napoleon
to Berthier,
July 26,
1812. Ibid.
i. 378. Jom.
i. 80, 81.
Fain, i. 297,
298. Ségur,
i. 242.

On the other flank, Tormasoff, finding that the Austrians under Schwartzberg were not advancing against

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

33.

Operations
of Tormasoff
against
Schwartz-
enberg. Peace
between the
Russians,
Turks, and
Swedes
becomes
known to
Napoleon.

July 14.

March 24.

¹ Jom. iv.
80, 82. Sé-
gur, i. 244.
Fain, i. 291,
311. Bout.
ii. 75, 76.

34.

Arguments
against any
farther ad-
vance at the
French
headquar-
ters, and
answer of
Napoleon.

him, fell suddenly on the corps of Saxons under Reynier, at Kobrin, and on the 23d July made prisoners an entire brigade of their best troops. It became indispensable, therefore, to support the Saxon corps by the Austrians under Schwartzenberg; and thus Napoleon lost the support of that auxiliary force, on which he had reckoned to supply the prodigious waste of human life in the campaign. While the Emperor, too, lay inactive at Witepsk, he received two pieces of intelligence which had a material influence upon his ulterior views in the campaign. The first was the peace of Bucharest, concluded on 14th July between the Russians and the Turks, whereby a large part of their army on the Danube was rendered disposable; and the second, the discovery of the treaty, of the 24th March preceding, between the Swedes and the Emperor Alexander, which not only promised to set free the Russian army in Finland, but threatened his rear with a descent from the Swedish forces. Information at the same time was received of powerful reinforcements to the army of Tormasoff, which were approaching from the Danube, and of great additions to the corps of Wittgenstein, which might soon be expected from the army of observation in Finland. At the same period, a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, was signed between Russia and England, by which a subsidy of £800,000 was provided to the former power; and it was stipulated, that in the event of the French invasion endangering the Russian fleet, it would be removed, as a measure of security, to the British shores.¹

These important events, and the intelligence of the prodigious armaments preparing in the interior by the activity of the Emperor Alexander, and the patriotic efforts of his subjects, led to the most serious reflections at Napoleon's headquarters. The expedience of a farther advance into the heart of the empire was discussed in his military council for some days. Several of his generals openly dissuaded him from the enterprise, as fraught

with the greatest hazard ; but after they had all delivered their opinions, the Emperor expressed his own as follows : “ Why should we remain at Witepsk ? The vicinity of the rivers, indeed, makes it a defensible position in summer ; but in winter what would avail their frozen streams ? We must, therefore, construct everything for ourselves : whereas at Moscow all is ready-made to our hands. A return to Wilna would be still more dangerous : it would necessarily lead to a retreat to the Vistula, and the loss of the whole of Lithuania. At Smolensko, again, we shall find at least a fortified town, and a position on the Dnieper. The example of Charles XII. is out of place : he did not fail because his enterprise was impracticable, but because he had not force sufficient to accomplish it. In war, fortune has an equal share with ability in success : if we wait for an entirely favourable train of circumstances, we shall never attempt anything ; to gain an object we must commence it. No blood has yet been shed : Russia is too powerful to yield without fighting : Alexander will not treat till a great battle has been fought. It is a mistake to suppose he is retiring from any premeditated design ; his armies retreated from the Dwina to effect a junction with Bagrathion ; from Witepsk, to unite with him at Smolensko.¹

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ Ségur, i.
224. Fain,
i. 321, 322.

“ The hour of battle is arrived : you will not have Smolensko without a battle ; you will not have Moscow without a battle. I cannot think of taking up my winter-quarters in the middle of July. Our troops are always in spirits when they advance : a prolonged and defensive position is not suited to the French genius. Are we accustomed to halt behind rivers ? to remain cantoned in huts ? to manœuvre in the same spot during eight months of privations ? The line of defence of the Dwina or the Dnieper is illusory : let winter come with its snows, and where are your barriers ? Why should we leave the fanatical people of the East time to empty their immense plains and fall upon us ? Why should we

35.
Napoleon's
answer con-
cluded.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

remain here eight months, when twenty days are sufficient to accomplish our purpose? Let us anticipate winter and its reflections. We must strike soon and strongly, or we shall be in danger. We must be in Moscow in a month, or we shall never be there. Peace awaits us under its walls. Should Alexander still persist, I will treat with his nobles. Moscow hates St Petersburg; the effects of that jealousy are incalculable.”—With such arguments did Napoleon justify his resolution to advance into the interior of the empire; but, in truth, the campaigns of Echemühl and Jena had spoiled him for the delays of ordinary war, or the precautions requisite between equal combatants. His career seemed blasted, unless he stepped from victory to victory; and even the dangers of a Russian winter were preferable, in his estimation, to the insupportable tedium of a lengthened residence at Witepsk.¹

¹ Ségur, i.
224. Fain,
i. 321, 324.

36.
Reflections
on this de-
termination.

In truth, the result is not always a proof of the wisdom either of military or political measures, because many things enter into its composition which cannot be foreseen by the greatest sagacity: a due appreciation of all the considerations which present themselves at the moment, is the utmost that can be effected by human ability. Before we condemn Napoleon’s advance to Moscow as imprudent, we should recollect that similar temerity had, in all his former wars, been crowned with success; that the experience he had had of Russian firmness at Austerlitz and Friedland, afforded no ground for supposing that the Emperor would resist the force of circumstances which had more than once constrained the pride of Austria and Prussia to submit; that a throne raised by the sword would be endangered by the least pause even in the career of success which had established it; that the peace with Turkey and Sweden would shortly expose his flanks to attack from forces which could not as yet be brought into the field; and that the fact of his actually entering Moscow with a victorious army demonstrates that he

possessed the means of reducing the Russians to that extremity, in which, according to all former experience, he might expect a glorious peace. These considerations, while they tend to exculpate Napoleon from blame in the important step which he now took, enhance to the highest degree the glory of the Emperor and people of Russia, by showing that the success which ultimately crowned their efforts was owing to a degree of firmness in adversity which was deemed beyond the bounds of human fortitude.

By a singular coincidence, at the very moment that Napoleon was thus adopting the resolution to advance into the interior of Russia, a similar resolution to resume the offensive had been taken at the Russian headquarters. Many causes had contributed to produce this result. The long-continued retreat, which had now extended to three hundred miles, had both depressed the spirits and excited the indignation of the soldiers, who, ignorant of the vast superiority of force with which they were threatened, murmured loudly at thus abandoning so considerable a portion of the empire without a struggle. The great losses sustained by the French during their advance, amounting to a hundred thousand men, were perfectly known at the Russian headquarters. Schouvaloff, who had been sent from Swanziani to Napoleon's headquarters on a political mission, had returned in perfect astonishment at the multitude of carcasses of men and horses which strewed the roads, and the swarms of sick and stragglers which crowded the villages. On the other hand, their own loss during the retreat had not hitherto exceeded ten thousand men, and twenty guns abandoned in the mud. They had now a united army of a hundred and twenty thousand men in the centre, and two wings of thirty thousand each, under Wittgenstein and Tormasoff, supported by the fortresses of Riga and Bobrinsk, to operate on its flank. The Russians had been greatly deceived as to the strength of the French army which had

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

37.
Simultaneous resolution to resume the offensive taken at the Russian headquarters.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

hitherto crossed the Niemen ; they reckoned it at three hundred and fifty thousand, whereas in truth it was four hundred and seventy thousand. Judging by this standard, they conceived they had not more than one hundred and fifty thousand in front of Barclay, and this did not appear so great a superiority as to justify, against the opinion of the army, a further continuance of the retreat. In fact, however, the enemy's army under the immediate command of Napoleon, was fully two hundred thousand strong, when the Viceroy and Junot, who were coming up, were taken into account. After much anxious consideration on the part of the Russian generals, in the course of which Yermoloff and Toll, the chief staff-officers, strenuously urged that the retreat should be discontinued and a vigorous offensive commenced, it was determined to move forward, and strike a blow at Napoleon while his forces still lay dispersed in their cantonments.¹

¹ Clausewitz, 110, 114. Bout. i. 247, 252. Chamb. i. 292. Ségur, i. 246, 251.

38.
Barclay
advances
against the
right of the
French
army, and
Napoleon
advances
towards
Smolensko.

Aug. 7.

Aug. 8.

The scattered position of the French army presented an opportunity for such an enterprise, with something approaching to equality of numbers—an object of the utmost importance, as their vast amount, when all collected, was still too great to justify the risking of a general battle ; and it was indispensable, by all means, to protract the war, in order to give time for the completion of the armaments in the interior. With this view, the Russians broke up early on the morning of 7th August, and advanced in three great columns against the French quarters. The mass of their forces, one hundred and fourteen thousand strong, was directed towards Rudnia ; while Platoff, with a chain of Cossacks, covered their movements. At Inkowa, this enterprising commander fell upon the advanced guard of Murat, under Sebastiani, consisting of six thousand horse and a regiment of light infantry, and defeated it with the loss of five hundred prisoners. This check roused the genius of Napoleon. He instantly despatched couriers in all directions to collect his corps, and assembled them in a body round his headquarters ;

and moved from Witepsk, by his own right, on the 13th August, in the direction of Smolensko. To repair the error which he had committed in leaving his forces so much dispersed, and giving the enemy the advantage of the initiative, he resolved to turn the left of the Russian army, and, by crossing the Dnieper, gain possession of Smolensko, and thus cut them off from the interior of the empire. With this view, on the 13th three bridges were thrown over the Dnieper, and two hundred thousand men suddenly assembled on the shores of that river. Amongst them the corps of Davoust, seventy thousand strong, was particularly distinguished by the strength of its divisions, and the admirable state of its discipline and equipments. Napoleon passed in a day the woody and rugged ridge which separates the Dwina from the Dnieper, and beheld, with a transport of youthful enthusiasm, that celebrated stream, known only to the Romans by their defeats, and the course of which to the Black Sea awakened those dreams of oriental ambition that from his earliest years had been floating in his mind.¹

The French army crossed the Dnieper at several fords in order of battle, with the Emperor in the centre on horseback, and at Liadi entered the territories of Old Russia. Advancing forward, Marshals Ney and Murat, who headed the leading column of the army, overtook, near Krasnoi, General Newerofskoi, who with the rear-guard, consisting of six thousand foot and twelve hundred horse, was slowly retreating in the direction of Smolensko. This little corps, which had been detached by Barclay to the other side of the Dnieper, after he had moved with the remainder of his troops to the right, found itself assailed on all sides by eighteen thousand horse, without the possibility of obtaining assistance from its comrades, who were on the opposite side of the river. The head of the retreating column being overtaken and stopped by the light cavalry of the French, the horsemen who formed the advance were speedily driven into the ranks of the

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

Aug. 13.
Aug. 15.
1 Fain, i.
354. Segur,
i. 252. Bout.
i. 253.
Chamb. i.
202.

39.
Heroic action of Newerofskoi near Krasnoi.
Aug. 15.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

infantry ; and the situation of the Russians was the more critical from the inexperienced nature of their troops, who were new levies that had never seen fire. Many generals in such circumstances would have deemed resistance impossible, and proposed a surrender ; but Newerofskoi thought only of his duty. Instantly forming his little army into two hollow squares, which were soon after united into one, he retired slowly and in admirable order over the immense open plains which adjoin the Dnieper, enveloped on all sides by innumerable squadrons, who charged them more than *forty times* during the day, and in some instances broke through the rampart of bayonets, and cut down the Russian officers in the very centre of the square. Nevertheless, they always formed again ; and this little band of heroes, still forming a lesser square when the larger was broken or weakened by loss, steadily retired during the whole day, repulsing, by an incessant rolling fire, the repeated charges of the French cavalry, and at length, on the approach of night, reached Kortinia with unbroken ranks, though with the loss of eleven hundred men and five pieces of cannon.¹

¹ Bout. i.
255. Fain, i.
359. Ségur, i.
260. Chamb.
i. 302, 303.

40.
Both armies
approach
Smolensko.

Napoleon continued to press upon the retreating Russian columns ; but on the following day Newerofskoi effected a junction with Raeffskoi, and their united force being nineteen thousand men, they resolved to throw themselves into Smolensko, and there defend themselves to the last extremity, in order to afford time for the main body of the Russian army to advance to its succour. Barclay and Bagrathion, meanwhile, being apprised of the approach of the French towards that town, and the imminent danger of their columns on the other side of the river, retreated with the utmost expedition in that direction. At daybreak on the morning of the 16th, the main Russian army marched on Smolensko, where Raeffskoi and Newerofskoi, with nineteen thousand men, were shut up in presence of the French army.²

² Bout. i.
257. Ségur,
i. 265, 266.

The ancient and venerable city of Smolensko, contain-

ing twenty thousand inhabitants, is situated on two hills, which there restrain within a narrow channel the stream of the Dnieper. Two bridges secure the communication between the two divisions of the city and opposite sides of the river. An old wall, thirty-five feet high and eighteen feet thick, surmounted by thirty lofty towers, formed its principal protection. In front of this rampart was placed a dry ditch, a covered way, and a glacis; but the ditch was shallow, and exposed to no flanking fire, and the covered way had no communication with the body of the place. Fifty guns of old construction were mounted upon the ramparts, but they were without carriages and in bad order; and the ditch was wholly wanting where the walls adjoined the Dnieper. Three gates only afforded an entrance into the town, one of which led to Krasnoi, one to a suburb, and the third across the Dnieper toward Moscow. Near the gate of Krasnoi was a half-moon beyond the ditch, intended to cover a breach in the walls, still called the "Royal Breach," made by Sigismund, king of Poland, in the days when Sarmatian grandeur had not yet been torn in pieces by democratic frenzy and external cupidity. A citadel of more modern construction was still less capable of defence, from the decayed state of its ramparts, which were only of mouldering earth, that in many places might be ascended without difficulty. The cathedral, a venerable old edifice with vast gilded domes, was an object of the highest religious veneration to the peasantry of Russia; and being the frontier and one of the chief cities of the old empire, the preservation of the place was an object of the utmost solicitude to the soldiers.¹

At four in the morning, Murat and Ney appeared before Smolensko, and the Emperor, having arrived an hour after, ordered an immediate attack on the citadel by Ney's corps, which Raefskoi repulsed with great loss before any succour from the main army arrived. Still the utmost anxiety possessed the Russian generals, and every

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

41.
Description
of that city.

Atlas,
Plate 74.

¹ Ségur, i.
266. Bout.
i. 258, 259.
Chamb. i.
311, 312.
Clausewitz,
120, 121.

42.
First attack
of Ney on
the citadel,
which is
repulsed.
Aug. 16.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

eye was anxiously turned towards the side of Krasnoi, from which the main army might be expected ; for the French columns, in enormous masses, were fast crowding round the town, and already the standards of a hundred and fifty thousand men could be counted from the spires of the cathedral. At length vast clouds of dust were seen afar off, in the plain on the opposite side of the river, and through their openings long black columns, resplendent with steel, appeared advancing with the utmost rapidity towards the walls of the city.* It was Barclay and Bagrathion hastening to the relief of their comrades, at the head of a hundred and twenty thousand men. Indescribable was the enthusiasm which this joyous sight produced : every one felt at once relieved from death or captivity. To the gloom of despair succeeded the transports of hope in every bosom. Hands pressed hands in silence ; glances were interchanged without speaking ; every eye was radiant with joy. Bagrathion was the first to enter, and, having secured the important communication of the bridges, instantly reinforced the heroic band who had so nobly maintained their post against the enemy.¹

¹ Ségur, i.
268. Fain,
i. 363, 364.
Bout. i. 260.
Chamb. i.
298.

43.

Napoleon's
dispositions
for a general
attack
on the town.
Noble appearance
of
his army.

Napoleon, conceiving that the enemy was resolved to defend Smolensko with all his forces, immediately made his dispositions for a general attack on the following day. His army, exclusive of the corps of Junot and the Viceroy, which were not come up, amounted to a hundred and eighty thousand men, with five hundred pieces of cannon. The Imperial Guard was in the centre : Murat, Ney, and Davoust, at the head of their respective forces, were pre-

* “ Dalla cittade intanto un ch’ alla guarda
Sta d’ alta torre, e scopre i monti e i campi,
Colaggiuso la polve alzarsi guarda,
Sì che par che gran nube in aria stampi ;
Par che baleni quella nube ed arda,
Come di fiamme gravida e di lampi.
Poi lo splendor de’ lucidi metalli
Scerne, e distingue gli uomini e i cavalli.”

Tasso, *Gerus. Liber*, iii. 9.

pared to commence the attack. The Emperor planted his tent in the midst of the first line, almost within cannon-shot of the city. Never was a nobler spectacle presented in military annals than the French army exhibited on the day preceding the grand attack on Smolensko. The simultaneously converging of so vast a multitude from all directions to the westward, presented to those who watched their movements from the domes of the cathedral, at first a confused multitude of men, horses, artillery, and chariots, who covered the earth as far as the eye could reach; but by degrees order began to appear in the chaos: the different corps and squadrons took up their allotted ground; the artillery ranged itself on the prominent eminences, and the admirable arrangements of modern discipline appeared in their highest lustre. Silently the troops defiled out of the crowd, and took up their appointed stations; no sound of drums or trumpets was heard, as on a day of parade; the solemnity of the occasion, the awful nature of the contest which awaited them, had impressed every heart: even the voice of the chiefs when giving the word of command was grave, sometimes faltering, though with other emotions than those of fear.¹*

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ Chamb. i.
309, 310.

But the Russian general had no intention of hazarding a general battle in a situation where he was exposed to the risk of being cut off from his communications with Moscow and the interior. Contrary to the opinion of Bagrathion and the principal officers of both armies, he resolved to retreat, and hold Smolensko merely by such a rearguard as might enable the troops to withdraw on

44.

The Russian
army retires
in the night,
leaving a
strong rear-
guard in the
city.
Aug. 17.

* “Ὡς τότε ἑπασσύτεραι Δαναῶν κίνυντο φάλαγγες
Νωλεμέως πόλεμόνδε· κέλευε δὲ οἷσιν ἕκαστος
ἡγεμόνων· οἱ δ' ἄλλοι ἀκὴν ἴσαν, (οὐδέ κε φαίης
τόσσον λαὸν ἔπεσθαι ἔχοντ' ἐν στήθεσιν αὐδὴν,)·
Σιγῇ δειδιότες σημαντορας· ἀμφὶ δὲ πᾶσιν
Τεύχεα ποικιλ' ἔλαμπε, τὰ εἰμένοι ἐστιχόωντο.”

Iliad, iv. 427.

How identical is the noble spirit in every age! What a true prophet is a poet! How true is human nature to the heroic visions of genius!

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

the road to Moscow in safety. Bagrathion accordingly defiled out of the city at four in the morning of the 17th, in the direction of Jelnia, to secure the road to the capital, and took post with the main body of the army, behind the little stream of the Kolodnia, about four miles distant; while Barclay, with the corps of Doctoroff and Bagawouth, still held the ramparts of Smolensko. Napoleon, exasperated at the sight of the retiring columns, and unable, after several efforts, to find a ford in the river in order to reach them, ordered a general assault, and at two o'clock in the afternoon all the columns approached the ramparts. In doing so he was actuated merely by his thirst for a *coup-de-main* to throw a lustre over the campaign; for, by the retreat of the Russian army, the town had ceased to be an object of importance, and the rearguard who still held it, might, by crossing the river, with ease be compelled to evacuate it on the following day.¹

¹ Ségur, i. 275. Bout. i. 262, 299. Fain, i. 367, 368. Chamb. i. 314, 315.

45.
Bloody attack on the town, which proves unsuccessful. Aug. 17.

Ney advanced to the attack of the citadel; Davoust and Lobau towards the suburbs which lay before the ramparts; while Poniatowski, with sixty pieces of cannon, was destined to descend and enfilade the banks of the Dnieper, and destroy the bridges which connected the old and new city. But the Russians were not unprepared for their reception. The suburbs were filled with musketeers ready to contest every inch of ground; and the ramparts, defended by two hundred pieces of heavy cannon and thirty thousand admirable troops, vomited an incessant fire on the assailants. Still the French masses, preceded by a numerous artillery, advanced with stern resolution to the attack. After an obstinate conflict, the besiegers established themselves in the suburbs, and a hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, within point-blank range, battered the walls of the city. The French army, stationed on the amphitheatre of surrounding heights, beheld with breathless anxiety the conflict, and announced with loud shouts the advance and

success of their comrades. The Viceroy's corps and that of Junot successively arrived before five o'clock, and formed the reserve of the assailants ; so that nearly two hundred thousand combatants were engaged in the assault, or grouped round the town, prepared to support the more advanced columns. But it was in vain that their batteries thundered against the ancient walls ; that column after column advanced through a storm of shot to the assault of the citadel ; and that the ardent intrepidity of the Poles sought to wrest from Russia the key of their independence, so often in former days mastered by their arms.¹

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ Ségur, i.
275, 277.
Bout. i. 266,
267. Fain,
i. 368, 371.
Chamb. i.
315, 318.

The thickness of the ramparts defied the efforts of the artillery, and the valour of the assailants sought in vain to wrest the gates from their defenders. Towards evening, the French howitzers succeeded in setting fire to some houses near the ramparts, and the flames, seizing on the wooden streets, spread with frightful rapidity ; but the firmness of the Russians remained unshaken, and, placed between the fire of the enemy in front and the burning city behind, they continued to present an undaunted resistance to the assaults of their enemies. Discouraged by the failure of such repeated and bloody attacks, and having experienced the total inability of his artillery, without regular approaches, to breach the massy walls of the town, Napoleon, at seven in the evening, commanded his troops to draw off, and at nine the cannonade ceased at all points. The Russians, after an arduous conflict, remained masters of the city ; and their advanced posts reoccupied the covered way. Thus the French Emperor, who had brought seventy thousand men to the attack, had the mortification to find all his efforts foiled by a Russian corps whose force never exceeded thirty thousand men, supported by the formidable ramparts which he had the boldness to expect to carry by a *coup-de-main*. Fully fifteen thousand men were lost to the invaders in these fruitless assaults ;² while

46.
Repulse of
Napoleon,
and results
of the bat-
tle.

² Bout. i.
268. Ségur,
i. 276.
Chamb. i.
332. Fain,
i. 377, 378.

CHAP.
LXXXII.

1812.

the Russians, on the 17th alone, lost nearly six thousand, and during the whole conflict not less than ten thousand men.

47.
Splendid
appearance
of the burn-
ing city.

The weather was calm and serene, and the unclouded sky reminded the Italian soldiers of the sunsets in their beautiful country. To the roar of artillery and the tumult of mortal conflict, succeeded a night of tranquillity unusual in the midst of such numerous assemblages of men, the result of the fatigue and exhaustion of the preceding days. During this momentary repose the fire spread with unresisted violence, and a vast column of flame ascended from the interior of the city. Around this blazing centre the corps of the French army were grouped in dense masses for several miles in circumference; the light of their watch-fires illuminated the heavens; but every eye was arrested by the spectacle of the burning city within. A dark band in front marked the yet unbroken line of the battlements; every loophole and embrasure was clearly defined by the resplendent light behind, whence volumes of flame and burning smoke arose, as from a vast volcano, over half the heavens: a lurid light, like that of Vesuvius, was cast over the extended bivouacs of the French army, while the lofty domes of the cathedral, still untouched by the conflagration, stood in dark magnificence above the ocean of fire. The troops beheld with awe the splendid spectacle, and, uncertain of the event, rested in suspense all night on their arms.¹

¹ Ségur, i.
277. Bout. i.
269. Chamb.
i. 318, 319.

48.
Retreat of
the Russians
from Smo-
lensko.
Aug. 18.

At three in the morning, a patrol of Davoust's scaled the walls, and penetrated without resistance into the interior of the town. Having met with neither inhabitants nor opponents, he returned to his corps, and the French advanced guard speedily entered the walls. They found the streets deserted. The work of destruction begun by the French howitzers, had been completed by the voluntary sacrifice of the inhabitants, who had fled with the retiring corps of their countrymen; and the

invading columns, in all the pomp of military splendour, traversed in silence a ruined city, filled only with smoking walls and dying men. Never did the horrors of war appear in more striking colours than to the invading troops as they entered that devoted city. Almost all the houses were consumed or in ruins ; dying soldiers or citizens encumbered the streets ; a few miserable wretches were alone to be seen ransacking the yet smoking remains, for any relics of their property which might have survived the conflagration. In the midst of this scene of wo, the cathedral and churches which had withstood the flames, alone offered an asylum to the unfortunate inhabitants ; while the martial columns of the French army, marching in the finest order to the sound of military music through the wreck occasioned by their arms, presented a grand and imposing spectacle. So skilfully, however, had the Russian retreat been conducted, that the magazines in the town had all been destroyed ; the wounded, and great part of the inhabitants, withdrawn ; and the bridges over the Dnieper broken down, amidst the horrors of the nocturnal conflagration following that dreadful day ; leaving naked walls, and the cannon which mounted them, as the only trophies to the conqueror.¹

CHAP.
LXXII.
1812.

¹ Ségur, i.
279, 280.
Lab. 105.
Chamb. i.
320. Bout.
i. 269, 270.
Larrey, iv.
30.

The abandonment of Smolensko, long regarded as the bulwark of Old Russia, was a matter of profound regret to the Russian soldiers, and furnished Napoleon with abundant matter for congratulation in his bulletins. But he soon found that the retreating enemy had lost none of their courage from this catastrophe. A column of French having passed the Dnieper at a ford, and entered the eastern suburb of Smolensko, were instantly attacked, and driven back across the river, by Baron Korf and the Russian rearguard, while the main body leisurely continued their retreat towards their brethren under Bagrathion. In conducting this retreat, however, the Russian commander had very great difficulties to encounter. Bagrathion had retired by the route to Moscow, in order

49.
Circular
march of
Barclay to
regain the
Moscow
road, and
to rejoin Ba-
grathion's
corps.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

to prevent the enemy from interposing between the army and that metropolis ; while Barclay, finding that route exposed to the fire of the French artillery when his columns began to withdraw, had injudiciously taken the road to St Petersburg, and every mile that he advanced led him farther from his comrades. On this occasion, the bad effects of the independent and co-ordinate command which Barclay and Bagrathion had of their respective armies, and the jealousy and misunderstanding to which it necessarily gave rise, had wellnigh proved fatal to the empire ; for if the two armies had marched a day longer on these diverging lines, their subsequent junction would have become impossible ; and Napoleon, with his immense host interposed between them, would have proved irresistible. In these circumstances, a circular flank movement became necessary ; a hazardous operation at any time, but more especially so to a retreating army, encumbered with an immense train of cannon, and in presence of an enterprising enemy. Nevertheless Barclay, seeing no alternative, adopted this perilous course, and for a day the fate of Russia was suspended by a thread ; for a vigorous attack by Napoleon on the moving columns might have renewed the disasters of Austerlitz.¹

¹ Bout. i.
270, 272.
Jom. iv. 96,
99. Ségur,
i. 281, 321.
Chamb. i.
222, 223.
Moniteur,
Sept. 2,
1812.

50.
Battle of
Valtelina.
Aug. 19.

Fortunately Napoleon was ignorant of the advantage which lay within his grasp, or was not in a condition to avail himself of it ; and a severe action with the rearguard alone took place, in circumstances where a general action might have been expected. Barclay, fully sensible of the impending danger, detached a strong body from his army to reinforce the rearguard of Bagrathion on the Moscow road, with instructions to proceed by forced marches to the point of junction, and defend to the last extremity the first tenable position, in order to give the main army time to regain, by cross roads, the Moscow route. Napoleon, having re-established the bridges over the Dnieper, advanced his columns both on the roads of Moscow and St Petersburg. Ney passed the river

before daybreak on the 19th, by the light of the burning suburbs, and advanced on the Moscow road as far as VALTELINA, where the Russian rearguard, stationed by Barclay to cover his cross movement from the St Petersburg to the Moscow road, was strongly posted on the opposite side of a ravine, through which the little stream of the Kolodnia flowed. The troops engaged were at first inconsiderable, but they were gradually strengthened on both sides, and the combat which ensued was one of the most obstinate that occurred in the whole war. Notwithstanding his utmost efforts, the Russian general Touczkoff was driven from his first position, and compelled to retire behind the rivulet; but being there reinforced by fresh troops, and eight pieces of heavy artillery, which Barclay brought up in person to the scene of danger, he renewed the conflict, and drove the enemy back again across the stream.¹

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ Bout. i.
276. Chamb.
i. 328. Jom.
iv. 100.

Napoleon was no sooner informed of the serious and unexpected resistance which Ney experienced from the Russian rearguard, than he despatched orders to the division Gudin of Davoust's corps, already signalised at the battle of Auerstadt,² to advance to his support; and at the same time, fearing that the enemy's whole army had assembled for battle, gave directions to Morand, who with another division of Davoust's corps was a little in the rear on a cross-road, which would have brought him direct upon the Russian flank, to halt and retire. This retrograde movement was performed with great difficulty, as at the time the order was received Morand's troops were involved in an old pine wood, where the intermixture of the advancing and retreating columns created extreme confusion. It was hard to say whether the Russians engaged owed most to this unusual want of decision on the part of the Emperor, or to the hesitation of Junot, who, having received orders merely to take a position on the right bank of the Dnieper immediately after crossing it,³ had not moral courage enough to undertake the respon-

51.
Measures of
Napoleon to
restore the
combat.
Desperate
valour on
both sides.
² *Ante*, ch.
xliii. § 52.

³ Bout. i.
276, 280.
Fain, i. 382,
384. Chamb,
i. 325. Jom.
iv. 100, 101.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

52.
Heroic re-
sistance of
Touczkoff,
and attack
of Ney.

sibility of attacking the Russian rearguard posted beyond that river, when engaged with Ney. This indecision was the more blamable, as his position would have enabled him to assail it with every advantage in rear, at the moment when it was already hard pressed by the enemy in front, and he was strenuously urged to do so by Murat.

Thus left to his own resources, with the assistance only of Gudin's division, twelve thousand strong, Ney, however, resolutely maintained the contest. He repeatedly attacked the enemy, both with musketry and the bayonet. Gudin's men outdid even their former glorious exploits. Four times did they cross the stream with the utmost intrepidity, and ascend the opposite bank with fixed bayonets; but they were constantly driven back by the devoted heroism of the Russians, who, aware of the vital importance of maintaining the position, were resolved to perish to the last man rather than abandon it. The generals on both sides came up to the spot: General Gudin was struck down by a cannon-shot when bravely leading his men to the charge; and General Touczkoff* was made prisoner in the midst of his staff by a furious irruption of the French cavalry. But the loss of their leaders made no diminution in the fury of the combat: both sides fought with invincible obstinacy: it was hard to say with whom victory in the desperate strife would ultimately rest. The contest continued with various success till nightfall; but at the close of the day the Russians retained their position, and, under cover of their heroic rearguard, the main army of Barclay had regained in safety the Moscow road.¹

¹ Jom. iv. 100, 102.
Bout. i. 276,
283. Fain,
i. 382, 385.
Ségur, i.
299, 300.
Chamb. i.
325, 330.
Moniteur,
Sept. 2,
1812.

This action, in which the French lost eight thousand, and the Russians six thousand men, had an important effect on the spirit of both armies. Ney commenced the combat with twenty-five thousand men; and by the accession of Gudin his force was raised to thirty-seven

* The commander of the cavalry, not the general of division bearing that name.

thousand : while General Touczkoff had hardly five thousand under his orders in the first instance ; and the whole reinforcements which were afterwards brought up to his assistance did not raise his troops to above twenty-five thousand men. The brave General Gudin was killed by the cannon-shot which struck him down while leading his troops across the stream, already red with human blood ; and his loss, in the opinion of Napoleon, would have more than balanced a victory. Notwithstanding their devoted valour, however, the Russians owed much to fortune on this occasion. Had Napoleon pressed forward with the main body of his forces, all the firmness of the rearguard could not have saved their army from total defeat while accomplishing its perilous movement. They themselves were astonished at not being attacked in flank by the cavalry under Murat ; and the conduct of Junot, in not hastening to the scene of action, appeared so inexcusable, that it was with the utmost difficulty the Emperor was dissuaded from at once depriving him of his command. Morand, with his numerous division of Davoust's corps, was abreast of Valtelina, at so short a distance from the Russian right that every cannon-shot was distinctly heard ; and, if not restrained by the Emperor's orders, he might by suddenly appearing have decided the victory. Finally, Napoleon himself did not arrive on the field till three on the following morning, when he found only the dead and the dying, instead of the desperate conflict which his eagle eye might have converted into an important victory.¹

The Russians in the night, having now happily reunited all their forces, continued their retreat, and retired by the Moscow road without farther molestation from their enemies. Following eagerly on their traces, Napoleon visited at break of day the field of battle. The regiments of Gudin's division were reduced to skeletons : the soldiers were black with powder, and their bayonets bent with the violence of the encounter ; the earth was ploughed with

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

53.

Results of
this bloody
action. Singular good
fortune of
the Russians.

¹ Bout. i.
284. Ségur,
299, 304,
305. Jom.
iv. 102, 103.
Chamb. i.
327, 329.
Fain, i. 385,
386.

54.

Napoleon's
visit to the
field of battle.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

cannon-shot, the trees torn and mutilated, the field was covered with broken carriages, wounded horses, and mangled bodies. The horrors of the scene had filled the minds of the survivors with melancholy ; but the presence of Napoleon restored their military ardour. He was prodigal of his praise, and of those acts of kindness by which he won the hearts of his soldiers. "With such men," he exclaimed, "you might conquer the world : this is the most glorious of our fields : the dead have won immortal glory." With his own hands he delivered an eagle to the 127th regiment, which had not hitherto acquired that honour, and loaded the troops of the other corps with decorations. The regiments were formed successively in hollow circles, in the midst of which the Emperor inquired of the officers who were the most deserving, and, if the men confirmed their nomination, the appointment of the persons named to superior rank was instantly completed. These honours, bestowed at such a moment, and from such hands, filled the troops with enthusiasm ; and the shattered remains of the regiments, proud of their diminished numbers, exulted in the thought that Europe was resounding with their praise.¹

¹ Ségur, i. 307, 309.
Fain, i. 390.
Chamb. i. 330.

55.
General
uneasiness
and depres-
sion of the
French
army.

In truth, a great effort was necessary to support the spirit of the army, which was considerably damped by the fatigues and dangers of the campaign. The objects that met the eye in Germany, and as far as the Oder, reminded the soldiers of France ; but in Poland and Lithuania everything wore a novel and gloomy aspect. The troops were seized with disquietude at finding themselves incessantly advancing through dark forests, intersected only by swampy streams or rocky dells ; their spirits sank at the interminable solitudes which surrounded them in every direction ; and the consciousness of their numbers only added to their apprehensions, from the obvious inadequacy of the country to provide for their necessities. The young conscripts, who advanced upon the traces of the grand army, were depressed by the

melancholy remains which everywhere presented themselves. Dead horses, broken carriages, and dying men, obstructed the roads and infected the atmosphere; while the veterans who had combated in the front contrasted the miserable quarters which they had gained amidst the ruins of Smolensko with the smiling villages they had abandoned in their native land. Even the chiefs were shaken by the general contagion: and those who had risen to the highest rank sighed to think that, after a life spent in arms, and wealth honourably acquired, they were reduced like common soldiers to the never-ending hardships of wretched food, incessant fatigue, and squalid habitations.¹

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ Ségur, i.
286, 287,
291.

Nor were the reports of the hospitals or the commissariat calculated to allay these gloomy anticipations. Already the march through Lithuania had cost the allied troops a half, the native French a fourth of their army, miserable victims of intemperance, disease, and fatigue. Out of thirty thousand Bavarians who set out from Munich, only twelve thousand entered upon the first actions on the Dwina.* Typhus fever and dysentery, the well-known attendants on military suffering, had everywhere broken out in the most alarming manner, and swept off thousands in all the great hospitals of the army. Wilna and Witepsk were converted into vast charnel-houses, where contagion completed the unfinished work

56.
Enormous
losses al-
ready sus-
tained from
sickness and
fatigue.

* "At its departure from the Bavarian states, this corps was estimated at *thirty thousand men*; on leaving Wilna it was still twenty-five thousand; but the march to Witepsk, without any other subsistence than two rations of bad bread each man, reduced it a half: so that on its entry into Polotsk, *without having seen the enemy, it could only muster twelve thousand combatants*. Thirteen thousand five hundred men had been lost by fatigue or want of provisions; of whom eight thousand were already no more, and the greater part of the sick gave no hope of recovery. It may easily be imagined from this in what a miserable state the troops under arms were: all, generals and soldiers, had been seized with a violent dysentery, which, in many cases, was combined with other complaints. It could not be otherwise; for the soldier had nothing to nourish him but meat without either bread or vegetables, in a country where the water was bad. There were no fermented liquors, and the mills were destroyed. It was the same with all the other corps in the French army."—MARSHAL ST-CYR, *Histoire Militaire*, iii. 62, 63.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ Ségur, i.
291, 312,
313. Chamb.
i. 333. St-
Cyr, Hist.
Mil. iii. 62,
79, 105.

57.
Napoleon's
reasons for
a farther
advance.

of human destruction ; and even the spacious convents of Smolensko, which had not suffered from the flames, were incapable of containing the multitudes of wounded who had been disabled under its walls. Such was the accumulation of corpses around the ramparts of that city, that they exceeded all that the strength of the survivors could bury ; and the smell which they diffused in every direction gave rise to a frightful epidemic, which in the end proved more fatal to the troops than the sword of the enemy. All the cottages in its environs were filled with wounded soldiers, both French and Russian, who, crowded together often without either straw or provisions, made known their existence and sufferings by the groans and lamentations which they uttered. Hundreds were forgotten, and perished miserably in the general confusion : the streets were blocked up by the endless files of chariots, bearing the sick and maimed, which incessantly traversed them ; and such was the multitude of amputated limbs which there was no time to destroy, that they accumulated in bloody heaps, and infected the air with their smell.¹

To any other mind than that of Napoleon these disastrous circumstances would have furnished reasons for delay ; but to him they afforded only additional and cogent arguments for an advance. He was aware how much his empire depended on opinion, and how rapidly these sinister auguries would be known to Europe, if not eclipsed by the lustre of a victory. "The condition of the army," said he, "is frightful : I know it. At Wilna, one-half were stragglers ; now they amount to two-thirds : there is not a moment to lose : we must grasp at peace, and it can only be found at Moscow. Besides, the state of the army is such as to render a halt impossible : constant advance alone keeps it together : you may lead it forward, but you cannot arrest its movement. We have advanced too far to retreat. If I had nothing in view but military glory, I would have nothing to do but return to Smolensko, and extend my wings on either side so as to crush Witt-

genstein and Tormasoff. These operations would be brilliant ; they would form a glorious termination to the campaign : but they would not conclude the war. Peace is before us : we have only to march eight days to obtain it : so near our object, it is impossible to deliberate : let us advance to Moscow."¹ *CHAP. LXXII.*
1812.
¹ Ségur, i. 293. Fain, i. 407, 408.

On the other side, the feelings of the Russian generals, as to the propriety of a farther retreat, underwent a change. The object in retiring from the frontier had been, to draw the enemy into a situation where his original superiority of force might be diminished by the fatigues and the diseases incident to a protracted advance, while their own were increased in a similar proportion by the approach to the centre of their resources. These causes, joined to the bloody battles recently fought, had already operated so powerfully, that the effective French army was not half its original amount ; while the losses of the Russians were more than supplied by the great armaments prepared in the interior. But a farther retreat would sacrifice all these advantages, because it would surrender to the enemy the capital and the richest provinces of the empire, from whence the principal resources for maintaining the war were to be drawn, while the invader would reap all the fruits of a victory without its dangers. The troops had long murmured at continually retiring before their enemies ; and the prospect of abandoning Moscow without a struggle, was likely to excite the utmost dissatisfaction not only in the army but the nation. So strong had these feelings become, that not even the authority of the Emperor was adequate to repress them. These reasons induced Barclay to resolve to give battle in the first convenient situation ; and he despatched orders to General Milaradowitch to hasten the levies in the interior, and direct the corps when formed to Wiazma.² *58.*
Reasons which induced the Russian generals to prepare for battle.
² Bout. i. 286, 287. Claus, 131, 132.

Napoleon was still further encouraged to advance from Smolensko, by the intelligence which he received at that

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.
59.

Operations
of Schwartzenberg
against Tormasoff.

Atlas,
Plate 73.

juncture from the armies on his two flanks. On the 12th August, Schwartzenberg, who had arrived with his corps of Austrians to the support of Reynier, attacked Tormasoff with nearly forty thousand men, who could only collect twenty-five thousand to oppose him. In an early part of the engagement, the left wing of the Russians was turned, notwithstanding the strength of their position, which was covered both in front and flank by morasses ; but the Austrians did not follow up their advantages with sufficient vigour ; and, by throwing back his left wing, Tormasoff contrived to prolong the contest without serious loss till nightfall, when he retired from the field, and got behind the Styr, with the loss of four thousand men and a few pieces of cannon. This victory, though by no means decisive, preserved the grand-duchy of Warsaw from invasion, and relieved Napoleon, for the time at least, from the disquietudes which he was beginning to feel for the communications in his rear.¹

¹ Jom. iv.
105. Ségur,
i. 285.

On the other side, Wittgenstein, on the day on which Tormasoff was engaged with the Austrians, attacked the advanced guard of Oudinot on the Svoiana, and drove it back with the loss of fifteen hundred men. Oudinot, in consequence, fell back to Polotsk, where he was joined by the Bavarians, and his army raised to above thirty-five thousand men. Wittgenstein, with only twenty-four thousand, had the courage to hazard a general attack on the French lines posted in front of Polotsk, and a bloody action ensued on the 17th August, without any decisive advantage on either side, but in which Oudinot was severely wounded. On the 18th, the battle was renewed, and both sides fought with the utmost obstinacy ; but in the end, although their cavalry had driven the French to the walls of the city, the Russians retired with the loss of seven cannon and two thousand men. The French, however, who had suffered nearly as much, were in no condition to follow up their advantage. St Cyr, who commanded after the wound of Oudinot, was, in consequence,

60.
And of St-
Cyr against
Wittgenstein.
Aug. 12.

Aug. 17.

Aug. 18.

made a marshal of the empire. Notwithstanding his success, he did not move forward till the 22d, when his advanced guard, consisting of the Bavarians under General Wrede, made an attack on the Russian rearguard, but experienced a severe defeat. Wittgenstein removed his headquarters to the fortified position of Sewokhino, where he awaited the reinforcements which were expected from Finland and St Petersburg.¹

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ Bout. ii.
55, 60. Jom.
iv. 106, 107.
Fain, i. 398,
402. St-Cyr,
iii. 60, 100.

Still farther to the Russian right, Marshal Macdonald having advanced to the neighbourhood of Riga with the corps under his command, consisting chiefly of Prussians, General Essen made a vigorous sortie, and attacked General Grawert at Eckau, whom he defeated with the loss of twelve hundred men. The operations, in consequence, languished on the side of Livonia; and nothing of importance occurred till a later period of the campaign. The corps of Marshal Victor, which had now come up to the Dwina, became a body of great importance, as it occupied a central position on the great road to Smolensko, in such a manner as to constitute the reserve at once of the grand army, Oudinot, and Schwartzenberg. Napoleon gave orders to him to advance to Smolensko, and intrusted the whole of Lithuania to his orders. This was done in pursuance of his usual system of placing powerful bodies of troops in echelon in his rear to preserve his communications. Thirty thousand men stationed in that strong position, directly in the rear of the grand army, and on its line of communications, appeared to give great security to the enterprise of the Emperor. His instructions were: "To direct all his attention and forces to the general object, which is to secure the communication from Wilna, by Minsk and Smolensko, with the imperial headquarters. The army which you command is the reserve of the grand army; if the route by Smolensko to the grand army is interrupted, you must re-open it at all hazards. Possibly I may not find peace where I am about to seek it;² but, even in that case, supported by so strong a reserve, well

61.
And of
Macdonald
against
Riga. Ad-
vance of
Victor to
Smolensko.

² Napoleon
to Victor,
Aug. 9,
1812. Fain,
i. 425, 427.
Bout. ii. 36,
62. Jom. iv.
108.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.
62.

And of
Augereau
from the
Oder, and
the National
Guard of
France to
the Elbe.

posted, my retreat would be secure, and need not be precipitate."

The advance of Victor to Smolensko left a void between the Niemen and the Vistula which it was essential to fill up ; and here, too, the provident care of the Emperor had arranged what seemed the means of absolute security. Augereau's fine corps, above fifty thousand strong, received orders to advance from the line of the Elbe and the Oder, where it lay, to the Niemen, and occupy all the principal points of communication from Berlin to the Lithuanian provinces ; while the hundred cohorts of the National Guard of France, which had been put on a respectable footing before the Emperor's departure from Paris, were moved forward from the fortresses of the Rhine, where they had been completing their discipline and organisation, to the strongholds on the Elbe. Instructions were at the same time sent to Schwartzberg, who was reinforced by some Polish regiments, to advance against Tormasoff, and secure the rear of the grand army from insult or injury from that quarter. Finally, to provide a reserve in France itself, and complete the great chain of communication from the Seine to the Moskwa, the Emperor ordered a new levy by conscription of one hundred and twenty thousand men, from the youth who attained the age of eighteen to nineteen, in 1813. Thus the whole of western Europe was to be precipitated on the devoted realm of Russia ; and the vast army of five hundred thousand, which the Emperor commanded in person, was but the advanced part of the mighty host which was to drive back to Asia the Tartar race.¹

¹ Fain, i.
428, 429.

63.

Advance of
Napoleon
towards
Moscow.
Aug. 22.

Encouraged by these successes, and having completed those dispositions which appeared to secure his rear, Napoleon left Smolensko with his Guards, and followed the Russian army, which was slowly retiring on the Moscow road. Barclay fell back by Dorogobouge to Wiazma, and from thence to Gjatsk, where Milaradowitch, with a reserve of sixteen thousand men, joined the army.

He was surveying the ground with a view to the choice of a field of battle, when he was superseded in the command by General Kutusoff, whom the Emperor had named commander-in-chief of all the armies. The wisdom of nominating to the supreme command a Russian by birth endeared to the soldiers by his recent victories over the Turks, and who might direct the movements of the scattered forces from the Danube to the Baltic, cannot be doubted. In truth it had come to be a matter of necessity. The Russians' clamour against being commanded by a general of foreign descent had become irresistible. But though Barclay was thus deprived of the fruit of his measures at the very moment when he might have expected to reap them, yet he gained immortal honour by the campaign which he had previously conducted. He had retreated above four hundred miles, in presence of an army twice as numerous as his own, headed by a general unrivalled for his talent in pursuing an enemy, without a single battalion having been broken, a single standard taken, or sustaining a greater loss in prisoners or artillery than he had inflicted on his pursuers. Scotland has good reason to be proud of her connexion with a leader capable of such achievements. History can furnish no parallel to a retreat of such peril performed with such success.¹

Kutusoff, who was thus in her last agony called by the unanimous voice of Russia to the command of her armies, was at St Petersburg when the eventful change befell him. He had been engaged, as we have already seen, in a campaign in which signal reverses had been succeeded by glorious triumphs on the Danube; and, beyond any other general in the Russian army, he enjoyed the confidence of the soldiers. Accustomed, in the great majority of instances, to be commanded by foreign officers, they beheld with unbounded enthusiasm a native Russian at the head of their battalions, and were confirmed in this attachment by the brilliant successes with which he had redeemed the campaign on the Danube, and restored to

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ Ségur, i.
358. Bout.
i. 290, 296.

64.
Appoint-
ment of Ku-
tusoff to the
supreme
command,
and general
joy it gave
to the army.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ *Ante*, ch.
lxix. § 96.

the Muscovite standards the triumphs of Ismael and Oczakoff.¹ Though victories so brilliant, however, had lately attended his arms, and a solemn *Te Deum* had been chanted at St Petersburg, in presence of the Emperor and court, on account of the peace with the Turks, Kutusoff himself laboured under a sort of disgrace at court, in consequence of its having been supposed that he had not conducted the negotiations at Bucharest with the expedition which the critical state of the empire required. The courtiers, observant of the least cloud which overshadows the fortunes of a leading character, were already shunning his society; and so low had the prospects of the future saviour of Russia fallen, that he received with tears of gratitude the visit of Count Oginski, a Polish nobleman, who had formerly enjoyed his intimacy in Lithuania, and had moral courage enough not to desert him in his adversity.²

² Oginski's
Mem. iii.
186, 187,
Claus. 94,
95. Bout.
i. 302.

65.
Alexander
unwillingly
gives him
the com-
mand.
Aug. 12.

Alexander was most unwilling, and justly so, to deprive Barclay of the command, as he with reason regarded his retreat from the Niemen to the Moskwa as a model of military skill, and as destined, perhaps, in the end to prove the salvation of the empire. But the public mind was now agitated to the greatest degree by the fall of Smolensko, and the continued retreat of the Russian armies towards Moscow; the ferment at St Petersburg was extreme, and all classes concurred in demanding, with loud cries, the appointment of Kutusoff, as the only guarantee for the integrity of the empire. Alexander yielded to the torrent, and the veteran general was appointed to the supreme command. The universal transports of all classes—nobles, army, and people—upon this appointment, proved how much he had endeared himself to the nation; the multitude in the streets threw themselves at his feet when he went to the cathedral in state, to offer up his supplications for the success of the armies, and besought him to save Russia.³ Loaded with their benedictions, accompanied

³ Oginski's
Mem. iii.
186, 187.
Bout. i. 302,
303. De
Stael, *Dix*
Années
d'Exil, 348.
Claus. 94,
98.

by their prayers, he set out for the army, charged with the salvation of his country and the deliverance of Europe.

CHAP.
LXXXII.

1812.

The whole life of the veteran who was now called to the momentous duty of directing the armies under the walls of Moscow, and whose brief subsequent career was attended with such extraordinary results upon the fortunes of Europe, had been devoted to the service of his country. He was nearly seventy when he was thus again summoned to measure swords with Napoleon,—having been born in 1745, and educated at the military academy at Strassburg. He had entered the army at sixteen; and, in 1765, commenced his military career with five successive campaigns against the Poles, and afterwards served three against the Turks. The snows of age had given him the caution of experience without extinguishing the fire of youth. He was descended from a noble Russian ancestry, and connected by marriage with the principal families of Moscow. His military renown had suffered less than might have been expected from the reverse of Austerlitz, as it is well known that the fatal cross march which brought on the disasters of that unhappy day,¹ had been undertaken on the suggestion of Weyrother, contrary to his advice. The recent successes gained in the war against the Turks had completely re-established his reputation. He had been repeatedly wounded in his different campaigns, and one of his injuries had deprived him of an eye. His height was moderate, his figure corpulent, and his manners distinguished by good-humour and bonhomie; but under this apparently simple exterior he concealed a remarkable degree of finesse and diplomatic address peculiar to his country, and in an especial manner unknown to the German race. He appeared, to an ordinary observer, destitute of mental activity, and to be allowing the officers of his staff to be taking the entire direction of affairs upon themselves;² but in secret

66.
His character, and previous achievements.

¹ *Ante*, ch. xl. § 121.

² Clausewitz, l41. Chamb. ii. 27, 28. Val. 171. Biog. Univ. xxii. 558, (Kutusoff.)

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

he was a close observer of what was going on, and possessed an extraordinary degree of cunning and dissimulation, which in the end made him more than a match for all the ministers of Napoleon.

67.
And habits
as a gene-
ral.

He had studied war profoundly, not only in the field but in the closet, and had brought an extensive theoretic acquaintance with military principles to bear on the experience which a long and active life in harness had given of its actual details. The soldiers were warmly attached to him, from the conviction acquired by experience, that without relaxing in the necessary rigour of discipline and subordination, he was at all times careful not to overload them with needless exactions, and ever solicitous about their material comforts ; while the recent and glorious successes which he had gained over the Turks, inspired them with a confidence which no general had enjoyed since the days of Suwarroff. The companion in arms of that illustrious warrior, he was like him attached to old habits, and ingrafted the affection of the soldiers on national manners, customs somewhat antiquated, and a scrupulous regard for the observances of religion, the great lever by which the public mind in Russia is to be affected. These qualities, from a knowledge of their influence on the soldiers, recommended him also to the higher and more enlightened classes, and compensated in general estimation the disadvantages of the advanced age of sixty-seven years, and the recollection of the fatal reverse, which, under his command, the Russian arms had experienced at Austerlitz. It may safely be affirmed, that never did commander undertake a hazardous and difficult duty more warmly supported by all classes of his countrymen.¹

¹ Chamb. ii.
27, 28. Bout.
i. 302. Val.
Guerre des
Turcs, p.
174.

The arrival of Kutusoff diffused general joy amongst the Russian troops. The successful termination of the Turkish war was considered as a presage of victory by the nation. His engaging manners, and paternal solicitude for their welfare, had long endeared him to the

soldiers ; confidence speedily succeeded to depression, and the troops began to burnish their arms and sharpen their flints in expectation of an immediate engagement.

But it was no easy matter to justify these expectations. The army was now hardly fifty leagues from Moscow, and that capital could only be saved by a general battle ; yet how engage in one with any prospect of success, with an army still (notwithstanding the arrival of sixteen thousand new levies and ten thousand of the militia of Moscow) greatly inferior in number to their opponents, and grievously depressed by the length of their retreat ? Nevertheless, it had become indispensable to run such a hazard, in order to check the consternation which, since the fall of Smolensko, was beginning to spread in the interior of Russia ; and Kutusoff readily embraced the views of Barclay as to the necessity of no longer delaying the perilous alternative. More than once in the course of the retreat, General Toll and the staff-officers had examined the ground with a view to selecting a field of battle, but none suited to the purpose could be found, as the country, perfectly level the whole way, afforded no positions sufficiently strong to counterbalance the still decided superiority in numbers of the French army.¹

On his side, however, Napoleon was not easy. During their march from Smolensko, the French army experienced great difficulties, which could only have been overcome by the experience and resources of their chiefs. The Russians, as they retired, burned the principal towns, and the inhabitants of the country voluntarily left their houses to avoid the tempest which was lowering in their rear. With such skill was the retreat conducted, that neither cannon, equipage, nor prisoners fell into the hands of the invaders ; and on one occasion, when the rearguard was attacked by Murat, the French, after an obstinate conflict, were repulsed from the field. Davoust, in a report to the Emperor upon the retreat of the Russians, observed —“ It must be confessed that their retreat is conducted

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

68.

Arrival of
Kutusoff at
the head-
quarters of
the army.
Aug. 29.

¹ Bout. i.
303, 305.
Chamb. ii.
28, 29.
Claus. 132,
133, 148.

69.

Extraordi-
nary skill
and order
of the Rus-
sian retreat,
and order
of the pur-
suit.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

in admirable order. The nature of the ground determines the position of their rearguard, and not the manœuvres of Murat. Their positions are so well chosen, and defended with such vigour, that it seems as if their movements are the result of a plan previously determined on, and executed with scrupulous exactness." Murat, at the head of a long column of twenty thousand cavalry, headed the pursuit; but it was in vain that the squadrons toiled through clouds of dust, from morning till night, under a burning sun; the horses sank under their fatigues without being able to reach the enemy. After this enormous body of horse came the infantry, marching in three great columns, all abreast; that in the centre kept the high-road, and was composed of the corps of Davoust, still the first both in numbers and discipline; on the right, in the fields, marched the corps of Poniatowski; on the left, that of Eugene; the Imperial Guard on the highway behind Davoust, and Ney in the rear. The artillery of these corps found their way as they best could, along the country roads or open plains parallel to the great chaussée. The enormous body advanced with astonishing rapidity, without any regard to difficulties or the means of subsistence: the weak, the sickly, broken carriages, dismounted guns, lame horses, were left behind; but the head of the column still pressed on with ceaseless march, devastating the plain in its progress, and trampling under foot the whole fruits of the earth, as if a gigantic rolling-stone had been drawn along its surface.¹

¹ Bout. i.
287. Ségur,
i. 318, 334.
Jom. iv.
111. Chamb.
ii. 23, 26,
29.

70.

Description
of the coun-
try through
which the
French
army passed
in advan-
cing to Mos-
cow.

The physical character of the country through which the army marched during its advance from Smolensko, had singularly facilitated this remarkable mode of sweeping, like a devastating flood, over a comparatively narrow space; but at the same time, it had impressed the most sombre and gloomy presentiments on the minds of the soldiers. Its great rivers are the only striking features of that boundless plain; everything else is lost in the immensity of space. Hardly any brooks are to be met

with, so frequently does the sand obstruct their course or drain away their waters. No variety of trees is to be seen; the eternal birch alone, planted in rows along the roadsides, relieves the monotony of nature. Even the absence of stones is felt as a subject of regret; so much is the mind fatigued by never perceiving new objects, or being permitted to repose on hills, rocks, or valleys. You see nothing on either hand but vast plains of corn, which appear to have been cultivated by invisible hands, so rare does the population appear in the boundless expanse around. A few woods of birch, villages separated by vast distances from each other, all formed of wooden houses constructed in the same manner, constitute the only objects which relieve the general uniformity of the scene. The approach to towns is indicated by no symptoms of greater animation: fruits and flowers are to be seen only in a few enclosures; orchards or vineyards are nowhere to be met with. Such is the expanse of Russia that everything is lost in it; even the chateaux of the nobility and the cottages of the people disappear. You would suppose that you were traversing a country of which the inhabitants had migrated to some other quarter of the globe. Birds, too, are wanting; animals are rarely to be met with; the unbroken extent has banished every other object except the extent itself, which incessantly haunts the imagination.¹

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ De Stael,
Dix Années
d'Exil, 248,
250.

Extraordinary difficulties were experienced by the French army in traversing this immense country. The Russians had set fire not only to the whole magazines, but to all the towns and villages on the line of their retreat; and these, being entirely built of wood, had burned to the ground. In the yet smoking ruins, the invaders could find neither shelter nor subsistence. They were driven, therefore, to send out columns to forage for subsistence to the right and left; and these bodies having no maps to guide their steps, in a country thinly inhabited, with few cross-roads, and often desolate, were frequently unsuc-

71.
Extraordi-
nary diffi-
culties of
the French
army in
their ad-
vance.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

cessful in finding provisions, and never obtained any but at an enormous cost of fatigue and trouble. The whole fields on the line of the retreat had been swept of their forage, and the French cavalry could find none but at the distance often of eight or ten miles from the high-road. The procuring water was a still greater difficulty alike to men and horses. The weather had for six weeks been dry, and was now intensely hot ; the springs, always scanty in that level country, were in great part dried up ; and those which still flowed as the Russians passed through, were either exhausted by the multitudes of men and horses which crowded to them to quench their thirst, or rendered so turbid by the constant stirring, and the animals' feet, as to be unfit for use.* In this extremity, recourse was had to the filthiest puddles to allay the burning heat which all felt ; and vast numbers of men and horses, after wandering all day in search of the precious element, dropped down dead at night from fatigue and thirst. The horses in particular suffered enormously from these causes. To such a degree did they affect the men, that in advancing from Smolensko to the Moskwa, though there was scarcely any fighting after Valtelina, the French army sustained a loss of no less than thirty-eight thousand men, and half that number of horses ; and their effective force which, on crossing the Niemen, was three hundred and one thousand, under Napoleon in person, had sunk, on arriving at Borodino, to one hundred and thirty-three thousand.¹

On the other hand, although the Russians also suffered severely from these causes, especially the want of water,

* " Ma non aspettar già, che di quell' oste
L' innumerabil numero ti conti.
I' vidi ch' al passar, le valli ascoste
Sotto e' teneva e i piani tutti i e monti :
Vidi che dove giunga, ove s' accoste,
Spoglia la terra, e secca i fiumi e i fonti ;
Perchè non bastan l' acque alla lor sete,
E poco è lor ciò che la Siria miete."

TASSO, *Gerus. Liber. xix.* 121.

¹ Claus. 95,
96, 179,
180.

yet in many respects they were more favourably situated than the French army. They had the immense advantage of retiring in their own country, being the first to go over the ground, and daily drawing nearer to their reinforcements. Enormous convoys from the interior had been provided with admirable care, laden with provisions, leather shoes, and necessaries of all sorts ; and in addition to this, the retiring columns found in all the towns and villages through which they passed large magazines of grain, on which the troops subsisted before they were committed to the flames. The young corn and rich grass in the fields supplied ample forage for the horses, though it was all consumed or trodden under foot before the French advanced guard reached them. Above all, the retreat was in a direct line, and on the great road only ; while the march of the French was doubled, often tripled, in length by unavoidable excursions on either side in quest of subsistence : and thus the exhaustion was incomparably greater in the advancing than the retreating army. And the reinforcements which reached the Russians as they drew near to the depots in the interior were so considerable, as not only to compensate entirely the loss sustained in the actions near Smolensko, but render the effective force fully one hundred and thirty thousand—or above ten thousand greater than when their standards fronted those of Napoleon before its sacred walls.¹

Napoleon, perceiving from the approach to Moscow that a general battle was at hand, gave three days' rest to his army, ordered a general muster-roll to be called off his troops along the whole line, and warned the straggling detachments that if they did not join their respective corps, they would lose the honour of the approaching conflict. Orders were at the same time despatched to the parks of reserve ammunition to advance, to the artillery to have their pieces in the best order, to the cavalry to refresh their horses, and to the soldiers to sharpen their sabres and examine the locks of their muskets. Meanwhile,

CHAP.
LXXXII.

1812.

72.

Superior
advantages
of the Rus-
sian army.¹ Clans. 175
176. Bout. i.
320. Chamb.
ii. 33.

73.

The Rus-
sians take
post at Boro-
dino. De-
scription of
their posi-
tion there.Atlas,
Plate 75.

CHAP.
LXXXII.

1812.
Sept. 2.

the Russians at length took post at BORODINO, which appeared to Kutusoff to present an eligible position for defence. The extreme right rested on the river Moskwa, which was not fordable; and on the right-centre the little stream of the Kolotza, flowing in a rocky dell, covered the line as far as the village of Borodino, which stood in the centre of the position, on an elevated ridge. On the left the army extended to the village of Semenovskoie, and the approach to it, though of easier access, was intersected by broken ravines, which promised to embarrass the movements of the enemy. To aid the advantages of nature, intrenchments were hastily thrown up by the Russian army on some parts of their line, especially on the left, where by nature it was the weakest; a wood on the right was strengthened by some fieldworks; in the centre, on the sloping banks of the Kolotza, two heavy batteries were placed; while between the centre and the left, where the position was most accessible, a great redoubt was erected on a height which commanded the whole plain in front of the army. On the left three other redoubts were placed, to aid by their cross fire the great redoubt; while, at the distance of nine hundred toises in front of the line, another redoubt was erected on an eminence, to retard the advance of the attacking host.¹

¹ Chamb. ii.
30, 31. Bout.
i. 307, 308.
Ségur, i.
360, 365.
Fain, i. 447;
ii. 4, 5.
Claus, 149.

74.
Napoleon's
arrival on
the field of
battle. He
attacks the
redoubt in
front.

On the 5th September the French army, in three great columns, passed the vast and gloomy convent of Kolotskoi without meeting an enemy; but as it approached the destined field, clouds of Cossacks were seen traversing the plain, and behind them the Russian army, in a dense and imposing mass, was descried drawn up in battle array. At this sight the advanced guard halted, and Napoleon instantly coming forward to an eminence in the front, surveyed the position with the eye of a conqueror, and fixed, with the rapidity of lightning, on the points of attack. The first object was to seize the redoubt in front of the position, where Prince Gortschakoff com-

manded ten thousand men, supported by twelve pieces of heavy artillery. The attack was conducted by Murat, with an immense body of cavalry, the division of Campans, and the corps of Prince Poniatowski. With an intrepid step the French infantry advanced to within twenty yards of the redoubt: the cannon on either side vomited forth grape-shot on their opponents, and the dauntless antagonists stood at that short distance discharging musketry at each other. At length, after a frightful struggle, the redoubt was carried by an assault of the 57th French infantry; but the Russians, returning to the charge, destroyed the troops who had entered it, and it was three times taken and retaken in the course of the evening. Finally it remained before night in the hands of the French. On the following morning, when the Emperor passed the 61st regiment, he asked the colonel where the third battalion was:—"Sire," he replied, "it is in the redoubt:" and in truth the whole of that brave corps had perished in the intrenchments which it had conquered.¹

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ Ségur, i.
364, 366,
367. Bout.
i. 313, 314.
Lab. 131.
Fain, ii. 3,
4. Gourg.
104. Chamb.
ii. 44. Claus.
150, 151.

During the course of the evening, intelligence was received at headquarters of the disastrous battle of Salamanca. Napoleon, though on the verge of fate himself, showed on this occasion no indulgence for the faults of his lieutenants, and bitterly inveighed against the rashness of Marmont, which had endangered all his successes in Spain. About the same time a portrait of the King of Rome was received from the Empress at Paris. At the sight of the much-loved image, the Emperor, who was tenderly attached to his son, melted into tears: the anxiety and danger of the moment were forgotten in the recollection of those he had left behind him. With his own hands he placed the picture on the outside of his tent, and called the officers and privates of his faithful Guard to share in the emotion which it had awakened in his mind. When the musketry ceased, both armies took

75.
Napoleon
receives the
account of
the battle of
Salamanca.
Night pre-
vious to the
battle.

CHAP.
LXXXII.

1812.

up their positions, and the fires of the bivouacs were lighted. Those of the Russians flamed in an immense semicircle, which illuminated the half of the heavens : those of the French were more scattered and unequal, as the troops successively arrived and took up their ground. Napoleon's tent was pitched on the left of the great road, amidst the squares of the Old Guard : but he slept little, being continually occupied in despatching orders and asking questions. He could not be induced to lie down till he was assured by those on the outside that, from the number of moving figures which surrounded their watch-fires, it was evident that the enemy remained firm on the ground they had chosen. He passed almost all the hours of darkness in dictating orders ; and it was not till midnight was far past that he could be prevailed on to take a few hours of repose. A young officer of his Guard never closed his eyes during that anxious night : Augustus Caulaincourt lay on the floor, wrapped in his cloak, with his eyes fixed on the miniature of his young bride, whom he had quitted a few days after their marriage, and whom he was never destined to see again in this world. His remains lie in the "red monument which his good sword hath dug" in the great redoubt on the field of Borodino.¹

¹ Ségur, 369, 370, 384, 386
Lab. 132.
Fain, i.
18, 19.

76.
Feelings of
the soldiers
on both
sides.

Both armies passed a restless, agitated night : so strongly had the intense anxiety of the moment come to operate on the excited frames of the soldiers. Never, in truth, in modern times, had interests so great, feelings so vehement, been brought into collision ; never were such results dependent on the arm of the soldier. On the one hand was the flower of the warriors of Europe, led by the consummate talents of Napoleon, which, after having subjugated all the states of the Continent, had now penetrated beyond the old frontiers of Europe into the wilds of Asiatic rule : on the other, a nation originally sprung from the Tartar race, and but recently emerged from barbarism, singly maintained the strife against

the mighty conqueror, and brought to bear against the accumulated forces of civilisation the unsubdued energy of the desert. The destinies of Europe, every one felt, hung on the contest. The battle about to be fought was the most momentous which had occurred in modern times ; on its result it depended whether the liberty of nations was to be maintained, or one overwhelming power was to crush all lesser states within its grasp. Still more, the moral destiny of mankind was at stake. On one side was arrayed talent, energy, perseverance, the acquisitions of science, the glories of civilisation, the wonders of discipline ; but the lustre of these brilliant qualities was tarnished by the purposes to which they were applied in the hands of the conqueror ; they were employed only to gild the chains of despotism, and deck out the banners of infidelity. On the other were to be seen courage, resolution, devotion, the vigour of rising civilisation, the pride of unbroken conquest, the ambition of boundless dominion. But the harsher features of these aspiring feelings were concealed by the patriotic grandeur of the cause in which they were engaged ; and the sanctity of religion threw a veil over the intermixture of worldly qualities by which its cause was to be maintained.¹

¹ Chamb. ii.
52, 53.

The army passed, for the most part, a sleepless night ; the common men being engaged in preparing their arms, the officers in protecting themselves from the cold, which already was severely felt at night, and in watching the Russian position, to see whether a retreat was commencing. But no sound was heard along the whole line ; their fires burned with a steady flame ; and morning alone extinguished the light of their bivouacs. When the dawn discovered the Russian army still in their position, and it was evident that a general battle was to take place, a universal feeling of joy pervaded the French troops, and the anxiety of the men evinced itself in a general murmur throughout their lines. The fatigues of the

77.
Napoleon's
proclamation to his
soldiers.

CHAP.
LXXXII.

1812.

campaign, the distance from home, the approaching dangers, were forgotten in the intense excitement of the moment. The Emperor, at break of day, withdrew the curtains of his tent, and advancing into the middle of the circle of officers who awaited his approach, mounted on horseback, and, riding to the heights in front, surveyed the whole of the Russian position: the weakness of the left made him resolve to make the principal effort at that point, and against the redoubt in the centre. At five, the sun, breaking through a fog, appeared in cloudless splendour: "It is the sun of Austerlitz!" said Napoleon, and immediately the trumpets sounded, the drums beat, and the following proclamation was read to the troops:—"Soldiers! the battle is at hand which you have so long desired: henceforth the victory depends on yourselves. It has become necessary, and will give you abundance; good winter-quarters, and a speedy return to your country! Conduct yourselves as you did at Austerlitz, Friedland, Witepsk, and Smolensko; and let the remotest posterity recount your actions on this day: let your countrymen say of you all—He was in that great battle under the walls of Moscow." The troops heard with enthusiasm these heart-stirring words, and their shouts were re-echoed from the Russian lines.¹

¹ Bout. i.
323. Bulletin, Moniteur, Sept. 28, 1812.
Fain, ii.
18, 19.

78.
Efforts of the Russians to animate the spirit of their troops. Kutusoff's proclamation.

Nor did the Russians neglect the most powerful means to animate the courage of their troops. On the evening of the 6th an unusual movement was observed in their position, and shortly a procession of dignified clergy, carrying an image to which miraculous powers were supposed to belong, passed through the whole lines of the army. The soldiers everywhere knelt before it, and mingled with the religious strains which rose from their ranks fervent prayers for their country, their families, and their religion. The priests bestowed their blessings on the prostrate army, and all, down to the meanest soldier, felt animated by the resolution to defend their

country, or perish in the attempt.* Shortly afterwards, preceded by the venerated image, and followed by all his staff, Kutusoff himself rode along the front of the line, immediately after which the following proclamation was read to the troops :—" Brother companions in arms ! You see before you in that image, the object of your pious regard, an appeal addressed to Heaven to join its aid to that of men against the tyrant who disturbs the universe. Not content with destroying millions of human beings, the images of God, that arch rebel against all laws, human and divine, has penetrated with an armed force into our sanctuaries, defiled them with blood, overturned our altars, and exposed the ark of the Lord, consecrated in that holy image of our church, to the desolation of the elements, and the profanation of impious hands. Fear not, therefore, that the Almighty, who has called that reptile from the dust by his power, should not be with you. Fear not that he will refuse to extend his buckler over your ranks, and to combat his enemy with the sword of St Michael. It is in that belief that I set out to combat, to conquer, if need be, to die—assured that my eyes shall behold victory. Soldiers ! Perform your duties : think of your cities in flames ; of your children who implore your protection : think of your Emperor, who considers you the strength of his arm ; and to-morrow, before the sun has set, you will have marked your fidelity and faith on the soil of your country with the blood of the aggressors."¹

¹ Chamb. ii.
51, 52. Bout.
i. 321. Fain,
ii. 11. Ségur,
i. 384.

The sound of the prayers of the soldiers was heard in

* "Va Pietro solo innanzi, e spiega al vento
Il segno riverito in Paradiso ;
E segue il coro a passo grave e lento,
In duo lunghissimi ordini diviso.
Alternando facean doppio concento
In supplichevol canto, e in umil viso.

Nè s'udian trombe o suoni altri feroci ;
Ma di pietate e d'umiltà sol voci."

TASSO, *Gerus. Liber.* xi. 5, 6.

CHAP.
LXXXII.

1812.

79.

Ridicule it
excited in
the French
army.

the French lines ; and great was the ridicule bestowed in that unbelieving host on what they deemed the mummery of the exhibition.* But the event proved that they are not the worst soldiers who are the best Christians : and the experienced observer, who reflects on the vast variety and force of the temporal stimulants to exertion which were arrayed under the standards of Napoleon, will gratefully acknowledge the wisdom which led the Russian chiefs to invoke the aid of higher influences ; and discern in the principles of religion, how much soever disguised under the forms of uncivilised worship, the only power that can in the last resort withstand the shock of that concentration of worldly ambition which occasions, or is occasioned by, a revolution.

80.

Forces en-
gaged on
both sides.
Davoust's
plan of
attack,
which is
rejected by
Napoleon.

The forces on the two sides were nearly equal : but the French had a vast superiority in cavalry, and in the quality of part of their troops. The Russian force was a hundred and thirty-two thousand, with six hundred and forty pieces of artillery ; but of these ten thousand were militia from Smolensko and Moscow, who had never seen service, and seven thousand were Cossacks : so that for the shock of battle they could only count on a hundred and fifteen thousand. The French force consisted of a hundred and thirty-three thousand, of whom thirty thousand were cavalry,† and they brought into the field

* "D' in su le mura ad ammirar frattanto
Cheti si stanno e attoniti i Pagani
Que' tardi avvolgimenti, e l' umil canto,
E l' insolite pompe e i riti estrani.
Poichè cessò dello spettacol santo
La novitate, i miseri profani
Alzar le strida ; e di bestemmie e d' onte
Muggì il torrente e la gran valle e'l monte."

TASSO, *Gerus. Liber. xi. 12.*

† Great disputes have taken place as to the forces engaged in this memorable battle ; but they are now ascertained in an authentic manner on both sides :—on that of the Russians by the official returns of Kutusoff published by Boutourlin ; on that of the French from the Imperial muster-roll called on the 2d September by orders of Napoleon, and published by Chambray from the archives of the War-Office at Paris.—See BOUTOURLIN, i. 320 ; and CHAMBRAY, ii. 32, 33.

five hundred and ninety pieces of cannon. Davoust proposed to the Emperor to move to the Russian extreme left during the night with forty thousand men ; and when the battle was engaged along the whole front, to attack the redoubts suddenly in flank, and advancing rapidly from left to right of the whole Russian position, terminate the war on the field of battle. But Napoleon, deeming the detachment of so large a portion of his force hazardous at such a distance from his resources, rejected the advice. He resolved to attack by echelon from the right, and disposed his masses to act accordingly. Marshals Ney and Davoust led the attack, at the head of their respective corps.¹

CHAP.
LXXXII.

1812.

¹ Bout. i.
320. Claus.
148. Ségur,
i. 328. Bout.
i. 320. Jom.
iv. 114, 117.
Gourg. i.
220. Chamb.
ii. 33. Fain,
ii. 21.

While these preparations were going on in the French lines, the Russians on their part were making everything ready to oppose to them the most vigorous resistance. The village of Borodino was occupied by a strong detachment of the Imperial Guards, and may be considered as an advanced post in front of the line. The great road from Smolensko to Moscow ran perpendicularly through the centre of their position : on its right, Bagawouth and Ostermann occupied the plateau which bordered the Kolotza ; the latter next the road, the former on the extreme right. On the left of Ostermann, and on the left also of the road, the massy columns of Doctoroff extended as far as the great redoubt, with the defence of which his left was charged. Beyond the redoubt, Raefskoi lay with his right resting on that bulwark, and his left on the village of Semenowskoi ; while the corps of Borosdin and division of Newerofskoi, on an eminence, held the three redans, and stretched beyond it to woods occupied by tirailleurs. Still farther, on the extreme left, Touczkoff had taken a position at the village of Ulitza, on the old road to Smolensko, with his own corps and the militia of Moscow, which were placed under his orders : the Imperial Guard was in reserve behind the centre. Owing to the contracted space of the ground on

81.
Russian dis-
positions for
the battle.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

which both armies stood, which was not more than two miles from right to left, they were drawn up in an uncommonly close formation ; so close, indeed, as to be almost without a parallel, and to render either host rather a huge close column than an army in battle array. All the corps were drawn up in two lines, with the exception of that of Touczkoff, on which, as he stood on the old road, a furious attack was anticipated, and which was in four. The whole cavalry was stationed in a third and fourth line in rear of the infantry, with the exception of one corps which was on the extreme right near the Moskwa ; while the formidable artillery lined the whole front of the position.¹

¹ Bout. i.
324, 327.
Chamb. ii.
48, 49.
Claus. 151,
152.

82.
French pre-
parations for
the attack.

On the side of the French, the preparations for attack were on a corresponding scale of magnitude. On the extreme right, Poniatowski was placed on the old road to Smolensko, opposite to Touczkoff ; next to him three divisions of Davoust, still, notwithstanding all their losses, thirty thousand strong, stood near the redoubt carried on the evening of the 5th ; on his left, Ney's corps was stationed, with Junot's directly in his rear, between the redoubt and the stream of the Kolotza ; the heavy cavalry of the reserve was behind the wood on one side of the captured redoubt, while the whole Imperial Guard, also in reserve, was on the other. Morand's and Gerard's divisions of Davoust's corps were placed on the left of Ney and Junot, under the orders of Eugene ; whose corps, with the heavy cavalry of Grouchy, formed the extreme left of the line. Thus the great bulk of the French army was concentrated round the captured redoubt, within cannon-shot of whose batteries eighty thousand veterans and three hundred guns were accumulated ; and it was easy to foresee that there the principal efforts of Napoleon were to be made. The extraordinary depth and closeness of the formation of both armies, of itself explains the obstinacy of the attack and defence in the conflict which ensued, and the unparalleled loss sustained on either side.²

² Chamb. ii.
47, 48. Fain,
ii. 17, 18.
Claus. 152,
153.

At six o'clock on the morning of the 7th,* a cannon fired from one of the batteries of General Sorbier, announced the commencement of the battle. The French columns advanced in echelon, with the right under Davoust in front : their masses moved on steadily, without firing, under cover of their artillery, notwithstanding an incessant discharge of all arms from the Russian position. Several generals were killed as they hurried over the plain, or toiled at the foot of the intrenchments : the ground was covered by moving masses, which incessantly rolled forward to the line of flame that marked the position of the hostile batteries. General Campans was severely wounded at the head of his division ; Rapp, who succeeded him in the command, soon shared the same fate ; Dessaix also was struck down, who succeeded Rapp ; and Davoust himself, injured by a contusion received by the fall of his horse, was for a short time disabled. The successive loss of all their chiefs for some time threw indecision into the French attack : but at length one of the redans on the left was carried. It was immediately retaken, however, by the second line of the Russians, which Bagrathion brought up to the attack : the combat continued with the utmost fury ; and Kutusoff, foreseeing that the left wing could not long withstand the repeated attacks which Napoleon directed against it, moved the corps of Bagawouth from the right of the army to its support.¹

While this fierce conflict was raging on the right centre under Davoust, Ney, impatient for the fight, was still inactive in the centre. He was so near the station of Napoleon, that the Emperor's aide-de-camp called the

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

83.

Battle of
Borodino.
Sept. 7.

¹ Jom. iv.
122. Ségur,
i. 390. Bout.
i. 327, 330.
Fain, ii. 23
26. Chamb.
ii. 61, 62.

* It is a singular coincidence that on that day four hundred and thirty-six years, (on 7th September 1376,) the great battle of Koulikoff was fought between Dmitri, the Russian Grand Prince, and the Tartars ; in which the former for the first time obtained a glorious but, as it proved in the end, fruitless triumph over their merciless oppressors. The numbers on each side were nearly the same, being one hundred and fifty thousand, on both occasions ; and what was still more singular, after both of these dreadful battles, Moscow was taken and burned.—See KARAMZIN, v. 78, 83.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

84.

Partial suc-
cess of Ney
and Eugene
in the centre.

marshal to receive his last orders. At length the moment being arrived for him to support the left of Davoust, the orders to attack the redans in that part of the enemy's line were given ; the drums beat, and Ney's three divisions precipitated themselves to the charge, preceded by seventy pieces of cannon ; while Murat prepared to aid them with ten thousand of his redoubtable cavalry. Soon the heads of the columns arrived in the awful tempest of canister and grape-shot ; but nothing could restrain their impetuosity. Gallantly facing the storm, they pushed on till they reached the foot of the intrenchments ; and then, breaking off to the right and left, passed between them, and entered the redoubts by the gorge. Upon this, however, Bagawouth's corps was instantly brought up from the extreme Russian right, where it lay unengaged ; and Bagrathion, putting himself at its head, not only expelled the enemy from their intrenchments, but pursued them for some distance into the plain. On the extreme right Poniatowski, in the first instance, carried Ulitza by a rapid charge ; but he was soon after arrested by Touczkoff in the woody marshes which lay around that village, where the nature of the ground would only permit tirailleurs to be employed. Eugene, however, on the left, carried the village of Borodino, on the left bank of the Kolotza, and immediately crossing his divisions over the bridges of that stream, prepared to assail the great redoubt in the centre of the Russian line, where Barclay lay with the flower of the Russian infantry.¹

¹ Fain, ii.
27, 28.
Chamb. ii.
62, 65.

85.

Ney and
Davoust,
after an
obstinate
conflict,
carry the
heights of
Semenow-
skoi.

These contests, however, at this period were subordinate : it was in the right-centre, where Davoust and Ney were striving for the heights of Semenowskoi, that the decisive blows were to be struck. These important heights soon became the principal object of contention : both parties strove, by accumulating forces upon that important ridge, to gain possession of an eminence which promised to render them masters of the field. After four hours' hard fighting, Ney, finding himself overmatched by

superior forces, anxiously demanded succour ; and Napoleon, perceiving that the heights were still in the hands of the Russians, made preparations for a grand attack. The Young Guard, and great part of the cavalry in reserve, were sent to the support of Davoust ; four hundred pieces of cannon were brought to bear upon the redoubts ; while, under cover of this tremendous fire, immense columns of infantry and cavalry advanced to the assault. In vain the fire from the Russian batteries swept off whole companies as they approached ; the survivors closed their ranks and advanced with a firm step and unbroken front against the rampart of death.¹

CHAP.
LXXXII.

1812.

¹ Chamb.
ii. 65, 66.
Ségur, i.
398, 399.
Bout. i.
338, 339.
Fain, ii.
31, 34.

Bagrathion, perceiving that the French were gradually gaining ground, ordered the whole left wing to issue from their intrenchments, leaving only the reserves to guard the works. The shock in the plain was terrible. Eighty thousand men, and seven hundred pieces of cannon, accumulated in a small space, not half a mile broad, strove with unparalleled fury for above an hour, without any perceptible advantage on either side. At length Bagrathion and the chief of his staff, St Priest, being both severely wounded, and Friant's division of Davoust's corps having assailed their flank, the Russians began to give way. General Konownitsyn, however, immediately assumed the command ; and, with admirable presence of mind, drawing back his troops with their whole artillery from the disputed ridge, and its intrenchments, established them in a strong position in the rear, behind the ravine of Semenskoi. The conquerors endeavoured to pursue their advantage, and the cavalry under Nansouty fell with the utmost fury upon the extreme left of the new Russian position ; but all their efforts were defeated by the devotion of the regiments of the Russian Guard, who formed square under a tremendous fire from their abandoned works, now lined by French cannon, and for the remainder of the day maintained their ground alike against the impetuous charges of the horse and the fatal ravages of the artillery.²

86.
Dreadful
struggle in
the plain in
front of the
Russian
works.

² Bout. i.
338, 340.
Ségur, i.
398, 400.
Chamb. ii.
65, 66.
Fain, ii.
31, 34.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

87.

The great
redoubt is
taken and
retaken.

Meanwhile an obstinate conflict was going on in the centre, where Barclay, after having lost the village of Borodino, still resolutely defended the great redoubt. The Viceroy, after having crossed the Kolotza, advanced with the utmost intrepidity through the broken ground which lay in his front, overthrew the division of General Paskewitch, and, aided by General Bonami, with his brave brigade, in the midst of the fire of eighty pieces of cannon, carried that formidable intrenchment. Kutusoff, sensible of the necessity of repairing the disaster, instantly brought forward his best troops, and, after an arduous conflict, not only retook the redoubt, and made Bonami and part of his troops prisoners, but, pursuing the broken battalions of the assailants, carried confusion and dismay into the French centre. It was at first reported at the Russian headquarters that Murat had been taken in the redoubt; and this report, though erroneous, diffused for a time extraordinary encouragement. Napoleon was anxiously solicited to support that point by the Imperial Guard: but he deemed it imprudent to risk that last reserve at so great a distance from reinforcements. After much hesitation he refused the succour, and Eugene was left for two hours to support unaided the terrible fire of the great redoubt, and the repeated charges of the Russian cavalry.¹

¹ Ségur, i.
406, 407.
Bout. i. 332.
Chamb. ii.
67, 68.
Claus. 159.

88.

Alarm on
the left by
an irruption
of Russian
cavalry.

The attention of the Emperor, however, was soon arrested by a violent outcry and confusion on his left. While Bagawouth and Ostermann were traversing the field of battle from the Russian right to their left, to aid in the defence of the heights of Semenowskoi, Platoff, who had been employed with two thousand Cossacks to discover a fort in the Kolotza on the Russian right, had passed over, and found the opposite part of the French line nearly defenceless, the troops having been all drawn to the French centre and right. He immediately despatched Prince Hesse-Philipsthal to Kutusoff, to represent that a vigorous charge of Russian horse in that quarter would

probably be attended with decisive effects. This intelligence arrived just at the moment when the news of the recapture of the great redoubt had arrived ; and Kutusoff accordingly detached two thousand five hundred cavalry of the Guard, under Ouvaroff, to cross the Kolotza, and make the attack, while he covered the movement by an attack on the left flank of Eugene's corps. This irruption was attended with the most signal success. A brigade of cavalry under Ornano was speedily overthrown ; soon the Cossacks passed Borodino ; Delzon's Italian division only avoided destruction by throwing themselves into squares, where they resisted with great steadiness ; the Viceroy escaped being made prisoner solely by taking refuge within one of the squares of infantry ; the baggage and artillery drivers fled in confusion ; and Napoleon himself deemed the attack so serious that he hastily galloped to the spot, accompanied by the cavalry and artillery of the Guard.* Ouvaroff, however, unsupported by infantry, retired across the Kolotza when he found himself threatened by large bodies of the enemy. But this diversion had an important effect, and, by withdrawing a portion of the reserve destined for the attack of the great redoubt, sensibly retarded the success of the day.¹

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ Fain, ii.
32, 33.
Chamb. ii.
69, 70.
Claus. 159,
161.

When the Russian intrenchments, however, on the left were carried, Napoleon resolved to make a desperate effort to regain his advantages in the centre. For this purpose more than two hundred pieces of cannon were directed against the great redoubt ; and while the Viceroy reformed his divisions for the assault, Caulaincourt, in command of Montbrun's division of cuirassiers, which he had

89.
Grand successful
attack on
the great
redoubt.

* " Or mentre egli ne viene, ode repente
Arme, arme replicar dall' altro lato ;
Ed in un tempo il cielo orribilmente
Intonar di barbarico ululato.
Questa è Clorinda che del re la gente
Guida all' assalto, ed ave Argante allato."

Ger. Lib. ix. 43.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

assumed as that general had just been struck down by a cannon-shot, was directed to penetrate through the Russian line, and, wheeling round, enter the redoubt by its gorge. "You will see me immediately, dead or alive," was the answer of the brave general: he set off at the gallop at the head of his followers, and the glittering mass was soon lost in the volumes of smoke as he approached the intrenchment. The Russians hastened, by all possible means, to support the point of attack: the corps of Ostermann was placed in front, and the noble regiments of the Guards, Preobazinski and Semenowskoi, were stationed as a reserve in their rear. Caulaincourt, advancing with the utmost rapidity, overthrew the regiments of Russian horse whom Kutusoff had opposed to him, while the great redoubt continued to vomit forth an incessant fire upon its assailants. Eugene with his infantry was advancing to the attack: the bayonets of his troops were already gleaming on its slopes, when the columns of the cuirassiers were seen ascending through the clouds of smoke which enveloped the intrenchments. Its sides seemed clothed in glittering steel; and the fire from its summit, after redoubling in fury for a few seconds, suddenly ceased. The flames of the volcano were extinguished in blood: and the resplendent casques of the French cuirassiers appeared, when the smoke cleared away, above the highest embrasures of the intrenchment.¹

¹ Ségur, i.
408, 409.
Lab. 144.
Bout. i. 341.
Chamb. ii.
71, Fain,
ii. 34, 36.

90.
Its capture
leads to no
decisive re-
sult. Fresh
advance of
the Russian
centre.

The death of Caulaincourt, who met a glorious end at the entrance of the redoubt, did not prevent the French from establishing themselves in their important conquest. The Russian soldiers charged with its defence, refusing quarter, had almost all perished in the assault: and the interior presented a frightful assemblage of dismounted cannons, dying men, broken arms, and wounded horses. Grouchy, hoping to profit by the consternation which its capture had occasioned, advanced at the head of his cavalry against the corps of Ostermann, drawn up on the

CHAP.
LXXII.
1812.

heights in rear ; but they were met by the chasseurs of the Russian Guard, overthrown, and driven back with severe loss. Encouraged by this success, and perceiving that the French on the left of the great redoubt kept themselves at a distance to avoid the terrible fire of the Russian batteries on the heights in the rear, Kutusoff resolved to make a forward movement, in order to reoccupy the ground on which his army originally stood in the centre at the commencement of the action. Ostermann's corps, with great part of the Guard and a large body of cavalry, advanced on this perilous mission. Slowly, and in admirable order, the Russian masses moved forward under the fire of the redoubtable batteries which the French had established on the heights won, and even reached the foot of the intrenchments, where eighty pieces of cannon thundered on their close ranks, with a severity of fire unexampled in war. At the same time, their cavalry, by several gallant charges, even carried some of the redoubts, and erected the Russian standards on their old strongholds. It was all in vain : they were speedily retaken, and the Muscovite battalions, unable to advance, unwilling to retire, toiled and struggled for nearly two hours, at the foot of the fieldworks they had lost. Wearied at length with the fruitless butchery, Kutusoff drew off, covered by his immense artillery ; and the Russians were again re-established along the whole line on the heights immediately in rear of their original position.¹

¹ Chamb. ii.
71, 73. Bulletin, Moniteur, Sept. 1812.

During this terrible conflict, several portions of the French reserve had been brought into action ; but the Imperial Guard, twenty thousand strong, stood motionless, like a dark thunder-cloud, in the rear. Platoff's Cossacks were still careering round the squares on the French left with extraordinary valour ; but though a regiment of the Russian Guard dashed across the Kolotza and joined them without orders, yet they could effect no material advantage, when unsupported by infantry and

91.
Final operations of the day.

CHAP.
LXXXII.

1812.

¹ Claus. 164,
165. Lab.
152. Bout.
i. 345, 346.
Fain, ii. 37.

artillery. The infantry masses were so much reduced, that not more than a third of their numbers stood erect. Meanwhile Milaradowitch planted the Russian batteries on the heights behind the redoubts; and from this second line the fire of artillery was so severe and incessant, that the French, far from advancing to the conquest, were obliged to shelter themselves on their knees behind the intrenchments they had won. Poniatowski alone, desirous of emulating the successes of the centre, advanced in the evening against the corps of Bagawouth, which then occupied the old road to Smolensko, on the left of the Russian line; and after an obstinate struggle carried the position, from which his opponents retired to the heights occupied by Bagrathion's corps, at a short distance in the rear.¹

92.
Close of the
battle, and
unparalleled
fatigue on
both sides.

Thus the Russians at all points, at the close of the day, had lost their original line of defence. But, though driven from their first line, their columns, with an immense artillery, were ranged in unbroken ranks on a second position still stronger than the first; while the enemy, exhausted by an engagement of unparalleled severity, were in no condition to commence a second battle to complete their successes. The cannon continued to fire with all the vigour which the artillerymen could muster on both sides till night, but no further operations of importance were attempted: the very guns, discharged at length only at intervals by single shots, had lost their original thunder, and gave forth a hoarse and hollow tone. The trumpets no longer gave forth their heart-stirring notes for the fight: the bayonets moved slowly to the charge.* The cavalry, brought up on both sides to supply the vacancies of the infantry, could hardly sit on their horses, and made their attacks only in a weary trot.

* "E l'ardimento col favor di Marte
Ne' cor fedeli, e l'impeto già manca:
Già corre lento ogni lor ferro al sangue;
E dellé trombe istesse il suono langue."

TASSO, *Ger. Lib.* xi. 57.

The very sabres were blunted by repeated strokes ; the arms of the men who bore them could scarce sustain their weight.* At length the French, exhausted with fatigue and carnage, fell back to the ground they had occupied before the battle, while the Russians strengthened themselves in their new position behind the ravine of Semenovskoi, and occupied with their advanced posts the whole surface on which they had stood before it commenced.¹ †

Such was the terrible battle of Borodino, the most murderous and obstinately disputed of which history has preserved a record. The wars of Timour or Attila may have witnessed a greater display of physical force, and been attended by a more prodigal waste of human life ; but in no previous contest were such formidable masses of disciplined forces assembled, or so gigantic an array of the implements of destruction exhibited. The armies of the whole Continent were here pitched against each other : not, as at Chalons or Tours, the fierce squadrons of invading barbarians against the tumultuary levies of feudal power ; but the disciplined forces of civilised ambition against the steady firmness of regulated patriotism. The wealth of Europe was exhausted for the equipment of the expedition, its talent concentrated in the direction of its force. The whole resources of Russia were required to oppose it, its utmost energy strained in resisting its fury. The dreadful loss on both sides demonstrated the unparalleled obstinacy of the contest. The Russians had

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.
1 Bout. i.
345, 347.
Ségur, i.
410, 411.
Lab. 152.
Fain, ii. 36,
37. Chamb.
ii. 77, 78.
Claus. 164,
166.

93.
Magnitude
and impor-
tance of this
battle. Loss
on both
sides.

* “ Tutto è sangue e sudore, e un grave e spesso
Anelar gli ange il petto, e i fianchi scote.
Langue sotto lo scudo il braccio oppresso ;
Gira la destra il ferro in pigre rote ;
Spezza, e non taglia, e divenendo ottuso,
Perduto il brando omai di brando ha l' uso.”

TASSO, *Gerus. Liber. ix.* 97.

† The author was informed by Sir James Wylie, physician to the Emperor Alexander, at Paris in 1814, that he himself bivouacked the night after the battle of Borodino *in advance* of the position occupied by the Russians before it commenced.

CHAP.
LXXXII.

1812.

¹ Bout. i.
349, 350.
Ségur, i.
414, 422.
Larrey, iv.
46. Fain,
ii. 41. Claus.
170, 172.

to lament the loss of one of their bravest and ablest generals, Prince Bagrathion, who fell nobly as he defended the redoubts on the left, and subsequently died of his wounds; and of Generals Kaitaisoff and Touczkoff killed, and thirty generals of inferior rank wounded. Fifteen thousand killed, thirty thousand wounded, and two thousand prisoners, presented a total loss of nearly fifty thousand men. On the French side, besides Generals Montbrun, Caulaincourt, and many others killed, thirty generals were wounded; and the total loss was twelve thousand killed, and thirty-eight thousand wounded. The trophies of victory were equally divided; the Russians took ten pieces of cannon from their enemies, who could boast of thirteen captured from them.¹

94.
Want of
vigour evin-
ced by Na-
poleon in
this battle.

Napoleon has been severely censured by some writers for not bringing forward the Imperial Guard towards the close of the action, in order to confirm the successes of the Viceroy and Ney. Certain it is that, in this battle, he was far from having exhibited the vigour or capacity which he had so frequently displayed on former occasions, and which had nowhere shone forth with brighter lustre than on the field of Wagram. His mental powers appear to have been in a great degree overwhelmed by the corporeal fatigue which he had recently undergone, and a painful malady which had, for the time, debilitated even his constitution of iron. A severe attack of rheumatism had deprived him of much of his former activity; and such was the state to which he was in consequence reduced, that at ten o'clock in the morning his strength required to be recruited by stimulating liquors. "He remained," says an unexceptionable eye-witness, General Mathieu Dumas, "during the engagement, on a position from whence he beheld the whole field of battle, immovable, seated on the edge of a ditch, or walking to and fro over a small space. It was not till half-past six that he mounted on horseback, and rode forward to the field, which was then strewed with dead."² The position thus

² Souvenirs
de M. Du-
mas, iii.
438.

chosen was so far from the theatre of action as to render correct observation with the eye impossible, and the communication of orders frequently tardy. At the most critical moments the Emperor evinced great irresolution. He appeared struck with apathy; and it may truly be said that he proved himself inferior, on this vital occasion, both to his previous reputation and his present fortunes.¹

CHAP.
LXXII.
1812.

¹ Chamb. ii.
76, 77.
Souv. de
Dumas, iii.
438, 439.

Notwithstanding all this, however, it may reasonably be doubted whether, had Napoleon enjoyed in this great battle all his former vigour, sound policy would have dictated any other course than that which he actually pursued. The reasons which he himself assigned to General Dumas and Count Daru, the very night of the battle, for not aiming at more decisive results, appear perfectly satisfactory.—“People will perhaps be astonished that I have not brought forward my reserves to obtain greater success; but I felt the necessity of preserving them, to strike a decisive blow in the great battle which the enemy will probably give to us in the plains in front of Moscow. The success of the action in which we have been engaged was secured; but it was my duty to think of the general result of the campaign, and it was for that that I spared my reserves.” Eight years afterwards he repeated the same opinion at St Helena. In truth, had the Guard been seriously injured at Borodino, it is doubtful if any part of the army, of which it was the heart, and of which, through every difficulty, it sustained the courage, would have repassed the Niemen. It is one thing to hazard a reserve in a situation where the loss it may sustain can easily be repaired; it is another, and a very different thing, to risk its existence in the centre of an enemy’s country, at a distance from reinforcements, when its ruin may endanger the whole army. The fatal result to the French of the battle of Waterloo, demonstrates the extreme peril of engaging the reserves before the strength of the enemy’s force has been finally broken;²

95.
Sound reasons, nevertheless, which prevented him from engaging his reserves.

² Dumas’s
Souvenirs,
iii. 440.
Gour. 244.
Nap. in
Month. ii.
94, Fain,
ii. 38.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

96.

Reflections
on the
battle.

and the risk of a rout at Borodino was incomparably greater than on the French frontier.

Though driven from their first line, the Russians still presented an undaunted front to the field of battle: they were masters of a strong position, defended by above six hundred pieces of cannon; and, notwithstanding their losses, seventy thousand men were still under arms. The recent advantages had been too dearly purchased to admit the hope of decisive success; and, if the action was renewed on the following day, no other force remained either to insure victory or avert disaster. In truth, the battle of Borodino affords one example of a fact which was abundantly demonstrated during the remainder of the war, that when troops are naturally brave, and their courage has been improved by discipline, the superiority of generalship in actual battle loses much of its importance. If large bodies of armed men lay down their arms the moment they are turned or cut off from their comrades, a skilful and vigorous attack is almost certain of success; but if they resist to the uttermost, and turn fiercely on their assailants, the peril is nearly as great to the assailing as the defending force. The attacks in column of Napoleon were frequently crowned with the most signal success against the Austrians and Prussians; but they seldom prevailed against the steady valour of the Russians, and never against the murderous fire of the English infantry.¹

¹ Jom. iv.
638.

97.

Distressed
condition of
the French
army at its
termina-
tion.

The French army, sensible of the magnitude of their loss, passed a melancholy night after the battle. The marshals were divided as to the prudence of a farther advance. The heroic Ney himself strenuously recommended a retreat. Such was the enormous accumulation of the wounded, that they far exceeded all the resources of the French surgeons, and they lay for days together neglected on the field. The little bread which remained was soon exhausted, and the wounded were compelled to live on horse-flesh. Even straw was wanting in the convent of Kolotskoi and the neighbouring villages, which

were converted into temporary hospitals, and the miserable wretches lay on the floor without either bedding or covering. During the night the Cossacks made an irruption into the lines, and the Imperial Guard were obliged to stand to their arms: a humiliating circumstance after what was held out as a decisive victory.* On the following day the Emperor visited the field; but the soldiers were too much depressed to receive him with their wonted enthusiasm. Grouped in small bodies round their eagles, stained with blood, and scorched with powder, their shouts of triumph were feebly heard amidst the cries of the wounded. The field of battle, over its whole extent, was strewed with dead bodies, broken guns, casques, cuirasses, and helmets, among which the wounded raised their heads to implore relief. Bleeding horses, maddened by pain, were occasionally seen moving in this scene of wo. A hoarse dull sound, like the roar of a distant cataract, alone was heard over the dismal expanse, from the groans of the wounded or their cries for water. Great numbers of these had crept into the ravines, to seek shelter from the storm of shot, or the severity of the tempest which succeeded it; their last breath uttered the names of their country, their mother, or their offspring.^{1†}

The Russians retired, the day after the battle, on the great road to Moscow. The magnitude of their loss rendered it too hazardous to risk the remainder of the army in a general action with the French, who had been considerably reinforced since the battle. They retreated only four miles, and in such order that no pursuit was

CHAP.
LXXII.
1812.

¹ Ségur, i.
421. Larrey,
iv. 57, 58.
Chamb. ii.
82, 91.

98.
Orderly re-
treat of the
Russians
towards
Moscow.

—
Atlas,
Plate 73.

* "Un événement," says Ségur, "assez fâcheux la veille d'une victoire."—SÉGUR, i. 421.

† "Giace il cavallo al suo signore appresso :
Giace il compagno appo il compagno estinto :
Giace il nemico appo il nemico ; e spesso
Sul morto il vivo, il vincitor sul vinto.
Non v' è silenzio, non v' è grido espresso ;
Ma odi un non so che roco e indistinto :
Fremiti di furor, mormori d' ira,
Gemiti di chi langue e di chi spira."

TASSO, *Gerus. Liber.* xx. 51.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

Sept. 8.

attempted. No signs of confusion appeared on their track ; neither chariots, cannon, nor prisoners, attested the retreat of a broken army. A severe engagement in front of Mojaïsk with the rearguard terminated, without any decisive advantage, in the loss of two thousand men to each side, and sufficiently taught the French that neither the courage nor discipline of their opponents had suffered any abatement. The good countenance preserved by this gallant rearguard on this occasion was of essential service to the Russian army ; it enabled Kutusoff to retain Mojaïsk till not only his whole artillery and chariots, but almost all the wounded were removed, before the town was evacuated on the following morning at ten o'clock. With such skill was the subsequent retreat conducted, that when the French arrived at the separation of the roads of Moscow and Kalouga, they were for some time uncertain, as at Witepsk, which of the two the retreating army had followed.¹

¹ Ségur, i.
423, 428.
Bout. i.
352, 356.
Chamb. ii.
87, 88, 97.
Claus. 172,
173.

99.
Debate in
the Russian
council of
war whether
they should
evacuate
Moscow.

No further engagement of consequence took place. Napoleon, on the same day on which it was abandoned by the Russians, entered Mojaïsk, and established his headquarters in that town, while his Guard bivouacked round it, and the other corps of the army slowly followed the enemy towards the capital. The retreat was conducted in so leisurely a manner, and the pursuit was so slack, that the army was considerably re-established in its equipments and organisation after the desperate shock it had received, before it approached Moscow ; and on the 13th a position was taken up half a league in advance of that city, where fieldworks had been commenced. Though Kutusoff at this period numbered only fifty thousand regular soldiers, with twenty thousand militia and Cossacks, round his banners, yet they were animated with the best spirit, and unanimous in the desire to fight another battle for the defence of the capital. A council of war was held to deliberate on the question whether they should adopt this bold resolution. Some were of

opinion that the position they occupied was not tenable, and that they should retire to a central point between the northern and southern provinces; Benningsen and Doctoroff were clear for fighting where they stood, as they maintained the army still mustered ninety thousand men, and the loss of Moscow would spread consternation through the empire.¹

Kutusoff and Barclay supported the proposal for a retreat, assigning as a reason that it was indispensable to preserve the army entire, and draw near to the expected reinforcements; and that the abandonment of the metropolis "*would lead the enemy into a snare, where his destruction would be inevitable.*" "Notwithstanding," said Kutusoff, "the valour which my army displayed at Borodino, I was obliged, as you know, to yield to numbers, and commence my retreat. Since that time the enemy has received numerous reinforcements, and at present I have fewer chances of success than I had then; our dangers are increased by the proximity of Moscow, where I should lose half my army if it was necessary after a reverse to traverse the capital. On the other hand, if we retire without combating, we must abandon it: a cruel sacrifice, it is true, but not one which draws after it the destruction of the empire. On the contrary, the enemy, far removed from his resources, possessing as his only communication the road from Smolensko to Moscow; on the eve of experiencing reverses on the Dwina, by the arrival of the armies of Moldavia and Finland, will find himself in the most critical situation. The army is in a bad position, and is inferior in numbers to the enemy: such were the losses which it sustained at Borodino, that entire brigades are now commanded by field-officers, and regiments by captains; hence the same precision in its movements is not perhaps to be expected as heretofore. Everything, therefore, conspires to prove that we should be beat if we fought a battle.² The safety of the country depends on the preservation of the army: a victory would

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ Bout. i.
362, Chamb.
ii. 99, 100.

100.
Reasons assigned by
Kutusoff for
abandoning
Moscow.

² Mem. de
Barclay de
Tolly sur le
conseil des
Officiers
Supérieurs
à Moscow,
Chamb. ii.
257.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

not rid us of the enemy, while a disaster so near Moscow would occasion its entire destruction." These words determined the assembly, and orders were immediately given for the troops to retire in the direction of Kolomna. On the morning of the 14th, the army continued its retreat, and in silent grief defiled through the streets of the sacred city.

101.
Total deficiency of supplies, if known to the Russians, would have forced the French to halt and retreat.

Notwithstanding these plausible, and indeed invincible reasons for a retreat, according to the information which the Russian generals possessed, nothing is more certain than that, if they had been aware of the real state of the French army, they would have stood firm, and that Napoleon, if he had hazarded a battle, would have been defeated, or driven, if he had declined it, to a disastrous retreat. Unknown to them, the French Emperor had advanced so inconsiderately, and with so little previous preparation, from Smolensko, that he was literally destitute of the means of fighting another battle. The bold front assumed by Murat and the advanced guard alone concealed the real weakness of the grand army, and above all its scanty supply of ammunition. All his care for the supply of the army had been confined to providing for his base at Smolensko ; from that point he had plunged into the heart of Russia, with no magazines and little provisions, except what the soldiers could collect on their line of march, already wasted by the systematic devastation of the retreating enemy. At Wiazma, little more than a third of the way, the want of everything had begun to be experienced ; and from that time, as they advanced onwards towards Moscow, the necessities of the troops had gone on continually increasing. The houses, to the distance of several miles on both sides of the great road, were invariably burned, either by accident or design, when the leading columns passed through ; and those which followed found the country a perfect desert. In the ruins of the dwellings, men, horses, and baggage-waggons were indiscriminately huddled

together after the manner of barbarians. The ammunition of the army was adequate only for a single battle; and that of Borodino, where ninety-one thousand cannon-shot had been discharged, had reduced the reserve stores so low, that there did not remain enough for a second general engagement.¹

A large convoy, it is true, had, on the 7th September, passed Smolensko; but it could not reach the army for a fortnight to come: and it was utterly impracticable for the troops to maintain themselves in front of Mojaïsk till that supply arrived. The little bread and flour which the soldiers brought with them from Smolensko had been long ago exhausted; the mills were all destroyed, and the grain removed: the soldiers subsisted on nothing but horse-flesh, and the few potatoes or vegetables which they could discover in the earth. Medicines for the sick, bandages and beds for the wounded, were nowhere to be found. So universal was the distress, that General Mathieu Dumas, who held the high situation of adjutant-general to the army, has declared that he regarded the burning of Moscow as an advantage, from the belief that it must force the Emperor to an immediate retreat. Had the Russians been aware of these disastrous circumstances, they would doubtless have held firm at Moscow, and Napoleon would have been driven to retire, even in sight of the prize which he so eagerly coveted. But they could not conceive that so experienced a commander would have precipitated himself three hundred miles into an enemy's country, without magazines or provisions, and with ammunition only for a single battle. Therefore they abandoned the capital; and to this ignorance of the real state of the French army, and consequent resolution to give up their metropolis, the total overthrow of Napoleon which ensued, is, beyond all question, to be ascribed.²

Nothing could exceed the consternation of the inhabitants of Moscow at finding themselves thus abandoned by their defenders. They had previously been led to

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ Fain, ii.
47.

102.
Great distress of the
French.

² Chamb. ii.
36, 38, 78.
Fain, ii. 47.
Larrey, iv.
58, 62.
Dumas,
Souv. iii.
450.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

103.

Universal
desertion of
the city by
the inhabit-
ants.

believe, from the reports published by the Russian government, that the French had been defeated at Borodino, or at all events that their entry into Moscow was out of the question. No preparations, therefore, for leaving the city had been made by the inhabitants, though arrangements to that effect had been commenced by the governor, COUNT ROSTOPCHIN, whose name has acquired an immortal celebrity from the awful catastrophe which soon followed. Speedily, however, the inhabitants left the city : in that extremity they reverted at once to the nomadic life of their ancestors. In a few days, nearly three hundred thousand had departed. The troops entered the gates with dejected looks, shedding tears of despair ; the streets, almost deserted by their inhabitants, mournfully re-echoed the sound of their tread ; it seemed as if Russia was attending the obsequies of her metropolis. Notwithstanding the confusion of the people, however, the march of the soldiers was conducted in admirable order ; and the army, abandoning the cradle of the empire, prepared in silence to avenge its fall.¹

¹ Bout. i.
363, 364.
Chamb. ii.
88, 105.
Dumas,
Souv. iii.
444.

104.

Arrival of
the French
at Moscow,
and descrip-
tion of that
city.

At eleven o'clock on the 14th, the advanced guard of the French army, from an eminence on the road, descried the long-wished-for minarets of Moscow. The domes of above two hundred churches, and the massy summits of a thousand palaces, glittered in the rays of the sun : the form of the cupolas gave an Oriental character to the scene ; but, high above all, the cross indicated the ascendancy of the European faith. The scene which presented itself to the eye resembled rather a province adorned with palaces, domes, woods, and buildings, than a single city. A boundless accumulation of houses, churches, public edifices, rivers, parks, and gardens, stretched out over swelling eminences and gentle vales as far as the eye could reach. The mixture of architectural decoration and pillared scenery, with the bright green of foliage, was peculiarly fascinating to European eyes. Everything announced its Oriental character, but yet without losing

the features of the West. Asia and Europe meet in that extraordinary city. It resembles Rome, not in the character of its edifices or architecture, but in the strange variety of styles which are to be met with, and which at once bespeak the Queen of half the globe. Many of its palaces are of wood, coloured green, yellow, or rose, and with the exterior ornamented with sculpture in the Moorish or Arabesque style. Nowhere does luxury and magnificence appear in a more imposing form, and nowhere are they placed close beside poverty in a more humiliating aspect. The Kremlin, the ancient palace of the Czars of Muscovy, where they defended themselves alternately against the Poles and Tartars, is surrounded by a high loopholed wall, flanked by towers, which resemble rather the minarets of a Turkish mosque than the summits of a European fortress. But, how Oriental soever the character of the scene may be, the number and magnificence of the domes and churches, with their gilded cupolas and splendid crosses, tell the beholder at every step that he is in the midst of the rule of the Christian faith.^{1*}

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ De Stael,
Dix Années
d'Exil, 281.
Chamb. ii.
111. Lab.
183. Ségur,
ii. 34.
Larrey, iv.
63.

Struck by the magnificence of the spectacle, the leading squadrons halted, and exclaimed, "Moscow! Moscow!" and the cry, repeated from rank to rank, at length reached the Emperor's Guard. The soldiers, breaking their array, rushed tumultuously forward; and Napoleon, hastening in the midst of them, gazed impatiently on the splendid scene. His first words were, "Behold at last that famous city!" the next, "It was full time!" Intoxicated with joy, the army descended from the heights. The fatigues and dangers of the campaign were forgotten in the triumph of the moment; and eternal glory was anticipated in the conquest which they were about to complete.

105.
Transports
of the troops
at the sight.
The French
enter, and
find the city
deserted.

* The most graphic description of the interior of Moscow in the English language, is from the pen of the Marchioness of Londonderry, the brilliancy of which induces a feeling of regret that the noble authoress should not have recorded her observations in a more durable form than in the pages of an ephemeral periodical.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ Bout. i.
366, 367.
Séguir, ii.
33, 36, 41.
Lab. 183,
196. Chamb.
ii. 112, 117.

106.
Prepara-
tions made
by the Rus-
sians for
burning the
city.

Murat, at the head of the cavalry, speedily advanced to the gates, and concluded a truce with Milaradowitch for the evacuation of the capital. But the entry of the French troops speedily dispelled the illusions in which the army had indulged. Moscow was found to be deserted. Its long streets and splendid palaces resounded only with the clang of the hoofs of the invaders' horses. Not a sound was to be heard in its vast circumference : the dwellings of three hundred thousand persons seemed as silent as the wilderness. Napoleon in vain waited till evening for a deputation from the magistrates or the chief nobility. Not a human being came forward to deprecate his hostility ; and the mournful truth could at length be no longer concealed, that Moscow, as if struck by enchantment, was bereft of its inhabitants. Wearied of fruitless delay, the Emperor at length advanced to the city, and entered the ancient palace of the Czars amidst no other concourse than that of his own soldiers.¹

The Russians, however, in abandoning their capital, had resolved upon a sacrifice greater than the patriotism of the world had yet exhibited. The governor, Count Rostopchin, had already set the example of devotion by preparing the means of destruction for his country palace, which he had set fire to by applying the torch with his own hands to his nuptial bed ; and to the gates of the palace he had affixed a writing with the following inscription :—" During eight years I have embellished this country house, and lived happily in it, in the bosom of my family. The inhabitants of this estate, to the number of seven thousand, quit it at your approach, in order that it may not be sullied by your presence. Frenchmen ! at Moscow I have abandoned to you my two houses, with their furniture, worth half a million of rubles ; here you will find nothing but ashes."* The nobles, in a public assembly, determined to imitate the example of the

* The author received this anecdote in 1814 from the lips of Count Rostopchin's son, at Paris.—See also CHAMBRAY, ii. 271. *Pièces Just.*

Numantians, and destroy the city they could no longer defend. The authorities, when they retired, carried with them the fire-engines, and everything capable of arresting a conflagration ; and combustibles were disposed in the principal edifices to favour the progress of the flames. The persons intrusted with the duty of setting fire to the city, only awaited the retreat of their countrymen to commence the work of destruction. Rostopchin was the author of this sublime effort of patriotic devotion ; but it involved a responsibility greater than either government or any individual could support, and he was afterwards disgraced for the heroic deed.¹

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ Bout. i.
370. Lab.
218. Chamb.
ii. 119, 120.
Claus. 189.

The sight of the grotesque towers and venerable walls of the Kremlin first revived the Emperor's imagination, and rekindled those dreams of Oriental conquest, which from his earliest years had floated in his mind. His followers, dispersed over the vast extent of the city, gazed with astonishment on the sumptuous palaces of the nobles and the gilded domes of the churches. The mixture of architectural decoration and shady foliage, of Gothic magnificence and Eastern luxury, excited the admiration of the French soldiers, more susceptible than any other people of impressions of that description. Evening came on : with increasing wonder the French troops traversed the central parts of the metropolis, recently so crowded with passengers ; but not a living creature was to be seen to explain the universal desolation. It seemed like a city of the dead. Night approached ; an unclouded moon illuminated those beautiful palaces—those vast hotels—those deserted streets : all was still—the silence of the tomb. The officers broke open the doors of some of the principal mansions in search of sleeping quarters. They found everything in perfect order ; the bedrooms were fully furnished as if guests were expected ; the drawing-rooms bore the marks of having been recently inhabited ; even the work of the ladies was on the tables, the keys in the wardrobes ; but not an inmate was to be seen. By

107.
First night
of the
French in
Moscow.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ Dumas,
Souv. iii.
444, 445.
Ségur, iii.
47. Lab.
164.

degrees a few of the lowest class of slaves emerged, pale and trembling, from the cellars, showed the way to the sleeping apartments, and laid open everything which these sumptuous mansions contained ; but the only account they could give was that the whole inhabitants had fled, and that they alone were left in the deserted city.¹

108.
Commence-
ment of the
conflagra-
tion.
Sept. 13.

But the terrible catastrophe soon commenced. On the night of the 13th a fire broke out in the Bourse, behind the Bazaar, which soon consumed that noble edifice, and spread to a considerable part of the crowded streets in the vicinity. This, however, was but the prelude to more extended calamities. At midnight on the 15th a bright light was seen to illuminate the northern and western parts of the city ; and the sentinels on watch at the Kremlin soon discerned the splendid edifices in that quarter to be in flames. The wind changed repeatedly during the night ; but, to whatever quarter it veered, the conflagration extended itself ; fresh fires were every instant seen breaking out in all directions ; and Moscow soon exhibited the spectacle of a sea of flame agitated by the wind. The soldiers, drowned in sleep, or overcome by intoxication, were incapable of arresting its progress ; and the burning fragments, floating through the hot air, began to fall on the roofs and courts of the Kremlin. The fury of an autumnal tempest added to the horrors of the scene ; it seemed as if the wrath of heaven had combined with the vengeance of man to consume the invaders in the city they had conquered.²

² Lab. 209.
Ségur, ii.
48, 51. Du-
mas, Souv.
iii. 447, 448.
Chamb. ii.
119, 120.
Larrey, iv.
72, 73.

109.
Awful ap-
pearance
during the
following
night.

But it was chiefly during the night of the 18th and 19th that the conflagration attained its greatest violence. At that time the whole city was wrapped in flames ; and volumes of fire of various colours ascended to the heavens in many places, diffusing a prodigious light on all sides, and attended by an intolerable heat. These balloons of flame were accompanied in their ascent by a frightful hissing noise and loud explosions, the effect of the vast

stores of oil, tar, resin, spirits, and other combustible materials, with which the greater part of the shops were filled. Large pieces of painted canvass, unrolled from the outside of the buildings by the violence of the heat, floated on fire in the atmosphere, and sent down on all sides a flaming shower, which spread the conflagration in quarters even the most removed from those where it originally commenced. The wind, naturally high, was raised, by the sudden rarefaction of the air produced by the heat, to a perfect hurricane. The howling of the tempest drowned even the roar of the conflagration; the whole heavens were filled with the whirl of the volumes of smoke and flame, which rose on all sides, and made midnight as bright as day;* while even the bravest hearts, subdued by the sublimity of the scene, and the feeling of human impotence in the midst of such elemental strife, sank and trembled in silence.¹

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ Larrey, iv.
73, 74.
Dumas,
Souv. iii.
449, 450.

The return of day did not diminish the terrors of the conflagration. An immense crowd of hitherto unseen people, who had taken refuge in the cellars or vaults of the buildings, issued forth as the flames reached their dwellings: the streets were speedily filled with multitudes flying in every direction with the most precious articles of their furniture; while the French army, whose discipline this fatal event had entirely dissolved, assembled in drunken crowds, and loaded themselves with the spoils of the city. Never in modern times had such a scene been witnessed. The men were loaded with packages, charged with their most precious effects, which often took fire as they were carried along, and which they were obliged to throw down to save themselves. The women had often two or three children on their backs, and as many led by the hand, which, with trembling steps and piteous cries, sought their devious way through the labyrinth of flame.

110.
Consternation and disorder in the city.

* "At the distance of three quarters of a league from Moscow, I could, at midnight, read the despatches which the major-general of the army addressed to me."—DUMAS, *Souvenirs*, iii. 450.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

Many old men, unable to walk, were drawn on hurdles or wheelbarrows by their children and grandchildren, while their burnt beards and smoking garments showed with what difficulty they had been rescued from the flames. Often the French soldiers, tormented by hunger and thirst, and loosened from all discipline by the horrors which surrounded them, not contented with the booty in the streets, rushed headlong into the burning edifices, to ransack their cellars for the stores of wine and spirits which they contained, and beneath the ruins great numbers perished miserably, the victims of intemperance and the surrounding fire. Meanwhile the flames, fanned by the tempestuous gale, advanced with frightful rapidity, devouring alike in their course the palaces of the great, the temples of religion, and the cottages of the poor. For thirty-six hours the conflagration continued at its height, and during that time above nine-tenths of the city was destroyed. The remainder, abandoned to pillage and deserted by its inhabitants, offered no resources for the army. Moscow had been conquered; but the victors had gained only a heap of ruins.¹ *

¹ Lab. 210,
211. Ségur,
ii. 49, 52.
Chamb. ii.
121, 122.
Larrey, iv.
75, 76.
Bout. i. 370.
Gourg. ii.
276.

111.
Napoleon
at length
leaves the
Kremlin.

The Emperor long clung to the Kremlin, in the hope that the cessation of the fire would enable him to retain his conquest. But at length, on the 16th, the conflagration had spread in every direction: the horizon seemed a vast ocean of flame, and the cry arose that the Kremlin itself was on fire. He gave vent to his

* It is a most extraordinary fact, that, more than four hundred years before, Moscow had undergone a similar destruction by fire from the ruthless hands of the victorious Tartars—"What words," says the Russian historian, "can adequately paint the deplorable state to which Moscow was then reduced? That populous capital, resplendent with riches and numbers, was annihilated in a single day; there remain only smoking ruins; piles covered with ashes and drenched with blood: you see nothing but corpses and churches sacked or half devoured by the flames. The awful silence of death is interrupted only by the pitiable lamentations of wretches covered with wounds, a prey to all the agonies of prolonged torture."—Singular destiny of a capital to have been twice the victim of such a catastrophe!—See KARAMSIN, *Histoire de Russie*, v. 101.

rage by commanding the massacre of the unfortunate men who had been intrusted with the duty of commencing the conflagration, and, yielding to the solicitations of his followers, abandoned the Kremlin. The wind and the rush of the flames was so violent, that Berthier was almost swept away by their fury; but the Emperor and his followers arrived in safety before night at the country palace of Petrowsky. General Mathieu Dumas and Count Daru, who were among the last that left the Kremlin, could scarcely bear the intense heat as they rode along the quay to follow the Emperor; and, on leaving it, their horses were with difficulty brought to pass between two burning houses at the entrance of the street, which formed the sole issue that remained to them. Arrived at length at Petrowsky, they had leisure to contemplate the awful spectacle which was presented by the conflagration. Early on the following morning, Napoleon cast a melancholy look to the burning city, which now filled half the heavens with its flames, and exclaimed, after a long silence — “This sad event is the presage of a long train of disasters!”¹

CHAP.
LXXII.
1812.

¹ Ségur, ii.
55, 59.
Gour. 274.
Dum. Souv.
iii. 449, 450.
Chamb. ii.
121. Bul-
letin, Moni-
teur, Sept.
1812.

Imagination cannot conceive the horrors into which the remnant of the people, who could not abandon their homes, were plunged by this unparalleled sacrifice. Bereft of everything, they wandered amidst the ruins, eagerly searching for a parent or an infant amidst the smoking heaps; and from the scene of devastation, the wrecks of former magnificence were ransacked alike by the licentious soldiery and the suffering multitude. The city, abandoned to pillage, was speedily filled with marauders; and, in addition to the whole French army, numbers flocked in from the country to share in the general license. Furniture of the most precious description, splendid jewellery, Indian and Turkish stuffs, stores of wine and brandy, gold and silver plate, rich furs, gorgeous trappings of silk and satin, were spread about in promiscuous confusion, and became the

112.
Horrors of
Moscow
after the
fire had
ceased.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

prey of the least intoxicated among the multitude. A frightful tumult succeeded to the stillness which had reigned in the city when the troops first entered it. The cries of the pillaged inhabitants, the coarse imprecations of the soldiers, were mingled with the lamentations of those who had lost their parents, their children, their all, in the conflagration. Pillage became universal in those days of unrestrained license: the same place often beheld the general's uniform and the soldier's humble garments in search of plunder. The ground, in the parts which had been consumed, was covered with a motley group of soldiers, peasants, and marauders of all countries and aspects, who sought in the smoking ruins the remains of the precious articles which they formerly contained. The church of St Michael, which covered the tombs of the Emperors of Russia, did not escape their sacrilegious violence; but no treasures were found to reward the cupidity of the depredators. The shouts of the marauders were interrupted by the shrieks of the victims of military license, and occasionally drowned in the roar of the conflagration; while not the least extraordinary part of the clamour arose from the howling of the dogs, which, being chained to the gates of the palaces, were consumed in the flames with which they were surrounded.¹

¹ Lab. 211,
215. Ségur,
ii. 67.
Chamb. ii.
123, 126.

113.
Semicircular march of
the Russian
army round
Moscow.

While these terrible scenes were passing in the metropolis, the Russian army retired on the road to Kolomna, and after falling back two marches in that direction, wheeled to the right, and by a semicircular march regained the route to Kalouga, in the neighbourhood of the Smolensko road. By this masterly movement, Kutusoff at once drew near to his reinforcements, covered the richest provinces of the empire, secured the supplies of the army, and threatened the communications of the enemy. The city of Kalouga, stored with ample magazines, served as the base of the future operations of the army. The camp at Tarutino, where he took post, was speedily filled with

provisions ; and the multitude of recruits who daily arrived from the southern provinces restored the spirits of the soldiers. Placed on the old central route between Moscow and Kalouga, this position enabled the Russians to defend all the avenues to that important city, and also to Toulâ ; and, at the same time, to reap the benefit of all the supplies which these provinces, by far the richest in grain in the whole empire, afforded. The event soon showed of what consequence the admirable selection of this station was to the future success of the campaign.¹

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

¹ *Jom. iv.*
152. Bout.
i. 375, 384.

In making this march, the troops were filled with the most melancholy feelings. The fugitives from the metropolis had already spread the intelligence of the fire ; and the lurid light which filled one half of the heavens, attested too plainly the truth of their tale. The roar of the flames, and the fury of the tempest, occasioned by the extraordinary heat of so large a portion of the atmosphere, was heard even at so great a distance ; and as the troops marched at night, their steps were guided by the glare of the conflagration. Only one feeling pervaded every breast, that of profound and ineffaceable indignation ; one only passion animated every bosom, that of stern and collected vengeance. The burning of the holy city had effaced all lighter feelings, and impressed a religious solemnity on that memorable march. Words there were none spoken in the vast array ; the hearts of all were too big for utterance ; the tread of the men alone was heard from the ranks ; but the silent tears which trickled down the cheek, and the glance of fire which was turned towards the heavens, bespoke the deep determination that was felt. Silent and mournful they continued their way, interrupted only by the burning fragments which occasionally fell among their ranks, and for a moment illuminated the stern visages of the soldiers. They left behind them their palaces and their temples ; monuments of art and miracles of luxury ;² the remains

114.

*Feelings of
the soldiers
in the Rus-
sian army
on this
occasion.*² *Guil. de
Vaud. i.*
203. Ségur,
ii. 72.
Claus. i. 88.

CHAP.
LXXXII.

1812.

of ages which had passed away, and of those which were yet unfinished; the tombs of their ancestors and the cradles of their descendants. Nothing remained of Moscow but the remembrance of the city and the resolution to avenge it.*

* Karamsin.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW.

THE stream of lasting conquest in every age has flowed from the north to the south. The superiority of arms, or the power of knowledge, have sometimes given the civilisation of refined, a temporary advantage over the courage of barbarous states ; but all the great settlements of mankind have come from the northern regions. The fanaticism of Arabia, the legions of Rome, for a time subdued the fairest regions of the globe ; but the dynasties they established did not attain lasting endurance. The empire of the Caliphs hardly survived the immediate descendants of Omar ; the crescent of Mahomet wavered till it was steadied by the conquests of Turkestan ; the discipline of Rome more easily conquered the whole of Asia than it did a few semi-barbarous tribes in the north of Germany ; and all the courage of the legions could not subdue the nations beyond the frontier of the Danube, or prevent the provinces of their dominion from at length becoming the prey of an uncivilised but indomitable northern enemy.

It is by the continued operation of this military superiority of the north over the south, that the purity of the moral atmosphere is preserved, and the progress of wealth rendered consistent with the preservation of virtue and energy of mankind. The south is the seat of the riches which corrupt, but the north is the abode of the energy

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

1.
General inclination of conquest from the north to the south.

2.
Final cause of this law of nature.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

which regenerates mankind. Civilisation, it is true, induces opulence, and opulence gives birth to corruption: but courage as certainly accompanies poverty, and valour in the end insures conquest. The accumulated wealth and decaying hardihood of civilisation, at once provoke hostilities and disarm resistance; while the augmented numbers of turbulent barbarism both require expansion and compel obedience. The stream of conquest overwhelms for a time the monuments of civilisation, and buries the labours of useful industry; but the victors insensibly acquire knowledge from the vanquished, and yield to the superiority of more advanced civilisation; while the conquered provinces are regenerated by the infusion of barbarian valour, and regain, amidst the hardships of life, the virtue they had lost by its refinements. Ages elapse during the mighty change, and generations seem doomed to misfortunes during the winter of existence; but the laws of nature are incessantly operating, and preparing in silence the spring of the world.

3.
Arrival of
the era in
the French
wars, when
the north
rolled back
conquest to
the south.

The era of Napoleon was not destined to form an exception to this general tendency. The enthusiasm which the French Revolution had occasioned, the talent it had developed, the military abilities of its chief, had rolled the tide of conquest backward to its source, and pushed far beyond the utmost limits of the Roman empire the dominion of southern civilisation. But the concurrence of these extraordinary events could not permanently alter the destinies of mankind. The flames of Moscow were the funeral pile of the French empire; from its ashes arose a spirit which could never be subdued. From that period commenced a succession of disasters which brought back the tide of conquest to the shores of the Rhine, and re-established the wonted ascendancy of the northern over the southern regions. But the second invasion of the northern nations was not stained by the barbarities which marked the first; the irruption of Alexander was very different from that of Attila. Other

conquerors have preceded him in the path of military glory ; other nations have bowed beneath the yoke of foreign dominion ; and other ages have seen the energies of mankind wither before the march of victorious power. It has been reserved to our age alone to witness, it has been the high prerogative of Russia alone to exhibit, a more animating spectacle. To show us power applied only to the purposes of beneficence, victory made the means of moral renovation, conquest become the instrument of political resurrection. After resisting the mightiest armament which the power of man had ever assembled against the liberties of mankind, we have seen her triumphant arms issue victorious from their desolated country, give liberty to those who had been compelled to attempt her subjugation, and avenge the ashes of her own capital by sparing the cities of her prostrate enemy. Before the march of her victorious power, we have seen the energies of the world revive ; we have seen her triumphant voice awaken every fallen people to nobler duties, and recall the remembrance of their pristine glory ; we have seen her banners waving over the infant armies of every renovated nation, and the track of her chariot wheels followed, not by the sighs of a captive, but by the blessings of a liberated world. ✓

In this moral renovation of nature all ranks have been compelled to participate. The high and the low, the rich and the poor, have been alike found at the post of honour. The higher orders, by whose vices these revolutions were occasioned, or by whose weakness an inlet was opened for these disasters, have been purified by the misfortunes themselves ; and in the school of adversity they have been trained to nobler employments, and called to the exercise of more animating duties. The lower ranks, by whose cupidity and ambition the crimes which disgraced the struggle were occasioned, have learned wisdom and gained experience in its course ; and the misfortunes of governments have given them a weight and an importance

CHAP.
LXXIII.
1812.

4.
Moral renovation of Europe which sprang from these events.

CHAP.
LXXXIII.

1812.

unknown in the former ages of the world. Even the sovereigns of Europe have felt the influence of the same causes : they have been driven from the abodes of ease and affluence, to join in the soldier's duties, and partake of the soldier's glory : they have been compelled to justify the eminence of their rank by the display of all the qualities by which it is ennobled. All that is great and all that is noble in Europe have been assembled in one memorable field : the prayers of emperors have ascended to Heaven for the success of the soldier's arm ; and the meeting of the sovereigns within the walls of Leipsic has realised all the magnificence of Eastern imagination, and all the visions of chivalrous glory.

5.
Calamitous
situation of
Russia at
this period,
and heroic
courage of
the Emperor
and Kutus-
off.

But the dawn of the day which was fraught with these mighty events, and destined to set amidst this blaze of glory, was dark and gloomy to Russia. The necessity of abandoning the metropolis, the ruin of the ancient capital, spread dismay through the empire. On the 16th September, Kutusoff announced the melancholy event, adding, as the only matter for consolation, "that the city was bereft of the population, who constituted its strength : that the people are the soul of the empire ; and that, where they are, there is Moscow and the empire of Russia." The Emperor displayed in these trying circumstances a heroism worthy of ancient Rome. On the morning on which the intelligence of the battle of Borodino reached St Petersburg, he sent for the English ambassador, Lord Cathcart. Without attempting to disguise that they had been overpowered in that bloody fight, and that the sacrifice of Moscow would be the consequence, he desired him to inform his government, that not for one nor twenty such calamities would he abandon the contest in which he was engaged ; and that, rather than submit, he would abandon Europe, and retire altogether to the original seats of his ancestors* in the Asiatic

* I received this striking anecdote from the lips of my late venerable friend Earl Cathcart himself.

wilds. He expressed the same determination in his letters to Kutusoff, adding his dissatisfaction that the semblance even of a negotiation with General Lauriston had been kept up.—“All my instructions to you,” said he, “all my orders, all my letters—in a word, everything should convince you that my resolution is immoveable, and that no terms whatever could induce me to terminate the war, or to fail in the sacred duty of avenging our country.”*

CHAP.
LXXXIII.
1812.

Nor did the public conduct of the Emperor fall short of these magnanimous declarations. His address to the nation, announcing the fall of Moscow, concluded with these remarkable and prophetic words :—“Let there be no pusillanimous depression ; let us swear to redouble our courage and perseverance. The enemy has entered Moscow deserted, as into a tomb, without the means either of ruling or subsistence. He invaded Russia at the head of three hundred thousand men ; half have perished from the sword, famine, or desertion ; the other half are shut up in the capital, bereft of everything. He is in the centre of Russia, and not a Russian has yielded to his power. Meanwhile our forces increase and surround him. He is in the midst of a warlike people, whose armies envelop him on every side ; soon, to escape from famine, he will be compelled to cut his way through our brave battalions. Shall we, then, yield, when Europe is in admiration at our exertions ? Let us show ourselves worthy of giving her an example, and bless the Hand which has chosen us to be the first of nations in the cause of freedom. In the present miserable state of the human race, what glory awaits the nation which, after having patiently endured all the evils of war, shall succeed by the force of courage and virtue, not only in reconquering its own rights, but in extending the blessings of freedom to other states ; and even to

6.
Alexander's
noble pro-
clamation.

* ALEXANDER to KUTUSOFF, $\frac{9}{21}$ Oct. 1812 ; BIGNON, xi. 125.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Bout. ii.
133, 134.
Ségur, ii.
73, 74.

those who have been made the unwilling instruments of attempting its subjugation! May the blessing of the Almighty enable us to return good for evil; by the aid of His succour may we be enabled to triumph over our enemies; and, in saving ourselves, may we become the instruments of His mercy for the salvation of mankind.”¹

7.
Plan of the
Russian ge-
neral for
surrounding
the French.

—
Atlas,
Plate 73.

The preparations of the Russian government corresponded to the grandeur of these resolutions, and their firmness was worthy of the cause in which they were engaged. The peace with Turkey had rendered disposable the greater part of the Moldavian army: while the treaty with Sweden, concluded by the Emperor in August at Abo, enabled the regular forces in Finland to be withdrawn for the reinforcement of the corps of Count Wittgenstein. When the main Russian force, therefore, retired before Napoleon, and drew the war into the interior of the country, two powerful armies were preparing to intercept his communications and cut off his retreat. The corps of Wittgenstein, augmented by the greater part of the troops of Finland, under Count Steinheil, and the militia of St Petersburg, to the numerical force of fifty thousand men, received orders to act vigorously against St-Cyr, and drive him from Polotsk, in order to approach the banks of the Oula and the line of retreat of the main French army. At the same time the army of Moldavia, under Tchichagoff, of an equal force, was directed to advance from the southern provinces, to pass the corps of Schwartzenberg, and establish itself on the line of the Beresina, and at the important bridge of Borissow. Thus, while Napoleon was resting in fancied security among the ruins of Moscow, and impatiently expecting the submission of Russia, a formidable force of a hundred thousand men was converging towards Poland from the shores of the Baltic and the banks of the Danube, to cut off his retreat to western Europe.² The empire was pierced to its heart; but instead of giving up

² Bout. ii.
128, 130.
Chamb. ii.
191, 192,
289.

the contest, it was extending its mighty arms to stifle the aggressor.*

History can furnish no parallel to the magnitude of these military combinations, or the sagacity with which they were conceived. Had subsequent events not rendered their complete execution impracticable, they unquestionably would have led to the surrender of the whole French army. From the forests of Finland to the steppes of the Ukraine, from the confines of the frozen to those of the torrid zone, multitudes of armed men were directed to one centre; the days of their march were accurately calculated, and the point of their union previously fixed. The neighbourhood of Borissov, and the 22d of October, were assigned as the place and time of their junction—a place about to acquire a fatal celebrity in French history. Nor is it the least memorable circumstance in this vast combination, that the orders which assembled these distant masses were issued from St Petersburg, during the consternation which immediately followed the fall of Moscow,¹ and

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

8.

Extraordi-
nary magni-
tude of these
combina-
tions.

Orders,
Sept. 18,
1812.

¹ Bout. ii.
128, 244,
248.

* The orders to this effect, from Alexander in person, which subsequently received Kutusoff's approbation, and were despatched to Tormasoff, Tchichagoff, Wittgenstein, and Steinheil, are dated September 18, 1812, and are given in Boutourlin, ii. 241; and Chambray, ii. 289. The precision with which the directions were given, and the marches calculated, so as to secure the grand object of combining a hundred thousand men at Minsk, Borissov, and the line of the Beresina, from the 15th to the 20th of October, directly in the rear of the main line of communication and retreat of the French army, is worthy of unqualified admiration:—"Tchichagoff was ordered to be at Pinsk by the 2d October, and to march thence by Nesvige to Minsk, so as to reach the latter town by the 16th, and thence advance to the line of the Beresina, and fortify Borissov and all the points susceptible of defence on the line of the enemy's retreat; so that the army of Napoleon, closely followed on its retreat by Prince Kutusoff, should experience at every step a formidable resistance. He was in this position to cut off all communication, even by couriers, between the French army in the interior and the remainder of Europe, and await the progress of events. Tormasoff received instructions to commence offensive operations on the 8th of October against Schwartzberg, with a view to drive his force from the environs of Nesvige and Pinsk, and leave the line of the Beresina clear for the occupation of Tchichagoff and Wittgenstein, who were to approach from the north and south at the same time in the same direction. Wittgenstein himself was to be reinforced by the 8th October by eleven thousand of the militia of St Petersburg, nine thousand old soldiers from Finland, and eight

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

9.

Measures of
Napoleon to
secure his
communica-
tions.

when Napoleon confidently calculated on the immediate submission of the Russian government.

It was by the genius of these combinations, however, not any neglect of the requisite precautions on the other side, that such formidable dangers were accumulating round the French Emperor. In advancing to Moscow, that great commander had not been unmindful of his line of communications. The corps of Victor, thirty thousand strong, had been, agreeably to the directions already given, stationed at Smolensko, with the double view of protecting the rear of the grand army, and aiding, in case of need, the forces of St Cyr on the Dwina; while the corps of Augereau, amounting to fifty-two thousand men, was placed in echelon through the grand-duchy of Warsaw and the kingdom of Prussia. Schwartzemberg, at the head of the Austrians, was more than a match for Tomasoff; and St Cyr, with the corps of Oudinot and the Bavarians, was destined to keep in check the army of Wittgenstein. It is remarkable that the penetrating eye of the French Emperor, so early as the 26th of August, and of course prior to the battle of Borodino, had dis-

thousand of the militia of Novgorod; and, after having collected all his reinforcements, he was directed to commence offensive operations on both sides of the Dwina, and strive to expel the enemy from Polotsk, and overwhelm the corps of Oudinot, who was to be driven off in the direction of Wilna, so as to separate him from the French grand army. Having accomplished this object, Wittgenstein was to leave the care of looking after the remains of Oudinot's corps to Count Steinheil, who was placed farther to the west, in the direction of Riga, and to move himself with the utmost rapidity to Doksitzky, where he was to be by the 22d October, and open up a communication with Tchichagoff at Minsk. In that situation he was to wait the course of ulterior events, and meanwhile do his utmost to secure every pass by which the enemy might retire from Smolensko by Witepsk towards Wilna. Lastly, the corps of Count Steinheil, which had been drawn from Finland, was to approach Riga, upon which the governor of that fortress was to march out with about twenty thousand men, and co-operate with him in such a manner as to occupy the whole attention of Macdonald, and prevent his sending succours to St-Cyr or Oudinot; and in the event of these marshals being beaten by Wittgenstein, he was ordered to fall upon the remains of their forces. These movements, taken in conjunction with those of the grand army in the neighbourhood of Moscow, and inducing the concentration of forces from the Danube to the Gulf of Finland, directly in the rear of the French army, are the greatest, and perhaps the most skilful military operations recorded in the annals of the world.

cerned the probable importance of the country between Minsk, Smolensko, and Witepsk, in the ulterior operations which might be expected before the close of the campaign—the very point to which the Russian armies were directed to converge. He had made, in consequence, every imaginable effort to strengthen his forces in that vital point of his communications. Victor received the command-in-chief of the forces in Lithuania: he was to establish his headquarters at Smolensko; and powerful reinforcements, especially of Polish and Lithuanian troops, were directed from all quarters to various points from that city by Borissow to Minsk. The great objects of this marshal were to be, keeping up on the one side a communication with Wilna, where a strong garrison and vast magazines were stationed, and on the other with the grand army in the interior of Russia.¹

CHAP.
LXXXIII.
1812.

¹ Napoleon to Berthier, Aug. 26, 1812; and Berthier to Victor, Aug. 27. Fain, ii. 61, 63. Jom. iv. 111.

Napoleon returned to the Kremlin, which had escaped the flames, on the 20th September, and anxiously awaited the impression which the intelligence of his success should produce on the Russian government. To aid the supposed effect, Count Lauriston was despatched to the headquarters of Kutusoff, with authority to propose an armistice; and Murat had an interview with General Benningsen. Prince Volkonsky was forwarded with the letter of Napoleon to St Petersburg; while the French deputation were amused by hopes of accommodation held out by the Russian generals. Meanwhile the Emperor lay inactive at Moscow, expecting the submission of the Russian government. But day after day, and week after week, rolled on without any answer to his proposals: the winter was visibly approaching, and the anxiety of the troops in regard to their future destination could not be concealed. Uneasy at the delay, the anxious and prophetic mind of Napoleon began to revolve what was to be done in the event of hostilities being continued. His first proposal was to burn the remains of Moscow, march by Tver to St Petersburg, and then form a junc-

10.
His unsuccessful attempt at negotiation.

Oct. 21,
1812.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

tion with Macdonald, who was still in the neighbourhood of Riga. But the difficulty of advancing with an army encumbered with baggage and artillery on a single chaussée, and traversing morasses and forests at the commencement of the winter season, was too obvious to his generals, and speedily led to this abandonment of the design. He subsequently thought of moving on Novgorod or Kalouga, but none of these projects were seriously entertained. Aware of his danger, but unable to prevent it, he remained passive, clinging to the hope of submission on the part of the Russian cabinet. Instead of taking a decided part of any kind, he risked the existence of his army by a continued residence at the Kremlin, and allowed the precious hours, which could never be recalled, to pass away, without taking any steps towards securing permanent quarters for the winter.¹

¹ Bout. ii.
134, 136.
Chamb. ii.
304. Ségur,
ii. 80, 83,
86. Jom.
iv. 146.
Fain, ii.
94, 95.

11.
His reasons
for a pro-
tracted stay
at Moscow.

It is not to be supposed from this circumstance, however, that Napoleon was insensible to the hazardous nature of his position, or the increasing perils of a retreat during a Russian winter. These dangers were fully appreciated by his discerning genius; but, great as they were, they were overbalanced in his estimation by the necessary consequences of so fatal a measure as a general retreat. The illusion of his invincibility would instantly be dispelled, and Europe would resound with the intelligence of his overthrow. "I am blamed," said he, "for not retreating; but those who censure me do not consider that it requires a month to reorganise the army and evacuate the hospitals: that, if we abandon the wounded, the Cossacks will daily triumph over the sick and the isolated men. A retreat will appear a flight: and Europe will re-echo with the news. What a frightful course of perilous wars will date from my first retrograde step! I know well that Moscow, as a military position, is worth nothing; but as a political point its preservation is of inestimable value. The world regards me only as a general, forgetting that I am an Emperor. In politics

you must never retrace your steps : if you have committed a fault, you must never show that you are conscious of it : *error, steadily adhered to, becomes a virtue in the eyes of posterity.*"* By such specious arguments did this great man seek to justify the excessive self-love which formed the principal blot in his character, and strive to vindicate the postponement, the painful acknowledgment, of defeat. Or rather the career of ambition, like that of guilt, is interminable. To exist, it must never cease to advance ; when once it pauses in its course, immediate ruin ensues.¹

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Ségur, ii.
93, 94.

Contrary to the usual course of nature in that latitude, the climate, during the first weeks of October, continued fine, and the sun of autumn shed a mild radiance over the scene of approaching desolation. The Emperor in his bulletins compared it to the weather at Fontainebleau in the close of September. The Russians, accustomed to see the snow begin to fall at that period, regarded the fineness of the weather as a sign of the Divine favour to their enemies ; little imagining that it was lulling them into a fancied security on the eve of their destruction. Meanwhile the discipline and efficiency of the French army were daily declining amidst the license which followed the pillage of Moscow. All the efforts of their commanders were unable to arrest the growing insubordination of the troops. Pillage had enriched numbers ; but amidst the general misery with which they were surrounded, the most precious articles were of no real value, and were gladly exchanged for a temporary supply of the necessaries of life. Miserable horse-flesh was eaten by the officers, who were arrayed in the finest furs and silks of the East, out of golden dishes : the common men, dressed in the spoils of Muscovite riches, were often on the point of starving.² The Emperor sought to conceal his anxiety, and restore the military spirit of his soldiers,

12.
Continued
fineness of
the weather
there. Ruin
of the disci-
pline of the
French
army.

² Ségur, ii.
66, 67. Lab.
237, 241.
Chamb. ii.
123, 124.
Bulletins
23 and 24,
Moniteur,
Oct. 12 and
21, 1812.

* Perhaps no words Napoleon ever uttered paint him so faithfully and completely as these. Yet, able as they are, they are delusive ; or rather they evince an insensibility to the moral laws of nature.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

by daily reviews at the Kremlin ; and, notwithstanding the fatigues and consumption of the campaign, they exhibited a brilliant appearance when they defiled through the palace of the Czars.

13.

Increasing
strength and
admirable
situation of
the Russian
army.

Very different was the spectacle exhibited in the patriot camp of the Russian army. Discipline, order, and regularity were there conspicuous : the chasms in the battalions were filled up by the numerous levies who arrived from the southern provinces : all the necessaries of life were to be had in abundance, and even many luxuries were brought thither by the wandering merchants from the neighbouring cities. The camp at Tarutino, now become the last hope of European freedom, presented the animating spectacle of universal enthusiasm. The veterans burned with desire to avenge the wrongs they had witnessed inflicted on their country ; the young soldiers, to prove themselves worthy of their heroic brethren in arms. None of the provinces refused to answer the call for patriotic exertion ; the roads were covered by recruits, joyously marching to the common rendezvous : the accustomed restraints to prevent desertion were abandoned, when all were pressing forward to the scene of danger. In the enthusiasm of the moment, the natural ties of affection seemed subdued by a holier feeling : the lamentations usually heard in the villages at the departure of the conscripts, were exchanged for shouts of exultation ; mothers wept for joy when they learned that fortune had selected their sons to be the defenders of their country, and tears were shed only in those dwellings where the sons were left at home, in the crisis of the country.¹

¹ Ségur, ii.
90. Bout.
ii. 117, 118.

14.

Feelings
and aspect
of the re-
cruits who
crowded to
the Russian
standards,

The Cossacks of the Don took arms in a body at the call of Platoff, and twenty-two regiments soon joined the army, composed chiefly of veterans whose period of service had expired, or youths who had never borne arms, but who joyfully assumed their lances when their country was in danger. These rude allies entered the camp

uttering loud shouts, which penetrated even to the French lines ; and the old war-cry of the crusades, *Dieu le veut ! Dieu le veut !* was heard from the descendants of the ancient enemies of the champions of Jerusalem. The savage aspect of the horses which these warriors brought with them from the wilderness, their uncombed manes which still swept the ground, their wild and unbroken carriage, the eager glance of their eyes, the dissonant sound of their neighings, attested how far the spirit of resistance had penetrated, and the strength of the feeling which had brought the children of the desert into the dwellings of civilised life. Constant discharges of musketry from the Russian lines indicated the multitude of recruits who were receiving the elements of military instruction. The troops at the advanced posts did not dissemble from the French the danger they ran by remaining longer in their present position : they expressed their astonishment at the security of their invaders on the approach of winter. “In fifteen days,” said they, “you will see your nails drop from your fingers, and your muskets fall from your hands. Had you not enough of food in your own country, room for the living, tombs for the dead, that you have come so far to leave your bones in a hostile land ?”¹

CHAP.
LXXXIII.

1812.

¹ Ségur, ii.
90. Bout.
ii. 121.
Chamb. ii.
279.

Kutusoff clearly felt, and nobly expressed in his letters to the Emperor, both the sacrifice which it cost him to abandon Moscow, and the immense advantages which his present position gave him with a view to the future operations of the army. “Foreseeing,” said he, “the necessity of the abandonment, I had already taken measures for removing from the city the chief part of the public and private riches it contained. Almost all the people have quitted the capital ; that venerable city is left like a desert of ramparts and private houses : what the body is when the soul has quitted it, such is Moscow abandoned by its inhabitants. The soul of the empire is the people ; and where they are, there is Moscow and

15.
Kutusoff's
clear views
of the ad-
vantages of
his situa-
tion.
Sept. 16.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

the empire. Doubtless, the desperate resolution to abandon the venerated city of our ancestors will wound every heart, and leave in the minds of the Russians ineffaceable regrets ; but, after all, it is but a town for the empire—the sacrifice of a part for the salvation of the whole. That sacrifice will procure me the means of preserving my whole army. I am master of the road to Tula and Kalouga ; and I cover, by the extended line of my troops, the magazines of our resources, the most abundant provinces of the empire, which furnish to our armies their flocks and their harvests. If I had taken up any other position, or had obstinately insisted upon preserving Moscow, I should have been obliged to abandon these provinces to the enemy, and the consequence would have been the destruction of my army and of the empire. At present I preserve entire my communication with Tormasoff and Tchichagoff ; and am in a situation to form, with my whole forces, a continuous line, which will completely intercept the communications of the enemy, and even straiten his intercourse with Smolensko itself. Thus, I trust, I shall be able to intercept all the succour which may be forwarded to him from his rear, and in the end constrain him to abandon the capital, and confound all his haughty projects.”¹

¹ Kutusoff to Alexander, Sept. 16. 1812. Chamb. ii. 278, 279.

16.
Ruinous
partisan
warfare
which went
on, on the
flanks and
rear of the
French.

Meanwhile, though a species of armistice reigned between the main armies, a destructive warfare began on the flanks and rear of the French position, which proved of the utmost moment in the sequel of the campaign. After the example of the Spaniards, the Russians established a chain of partisans round the invading army, which cut off all their foraging parties, and, growing bolder from success, soon held them almost imprisoned in their cantonments. The militia of the contiguous provinces, aided by the Cossacks of the Don, formed a vast circle round Moscow, occupying every road, and cutting off all supplies of provisions to the Emperor’s forces. The want of forage was soon so severely felt, that the

cavalry were obliged to penetrate to a considerable distance in quest of subsistence; and these detachments in most cases fell into the hands of the numerous corps of the hostile circle. So early as the 10th October, General Dorokoff captured a whole regiment of Westphalians, and large magazines, in the town of Vereva; while Colonel Davidoff, on the great road to Smolensko, destroyed numerous detachments even of the Imperial Guard. This latter officer had the merit of recommending, and himself setting the example of the organisation of this formidable species of force in the Russian war; and the event soon proved that it was calculated to effect far greater changes there than in the mountains of Spain, as the long line of communication in the French rear was open to their attacks, and the irregular hordes from the Don furnished an ample supply of troops admirably adapted for this kind of warfare. During the first three weeks of October, the partisans round Moscow made prisoners of no less than four thousand one hundred and eighty French soldiers; and the reports from Murat announced the alarming intelligence, that *one-half* of the whole surviving cavalry of the army had perished in these inglorious encounters.¹

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

Oct. 10.

¹ Davidoff, Guerre des Partisans, 127. Ségur, ii. 88, 90. Bout. ii. 119, 120, 138. Chamb. ii. 127. Fain, ii. 96.

Although the principal object of the Russians in the conflagration of Moscow had been to render it impossible for the French to remain there, yet, though this result had not ensued, the effect which did take place was not, in the end, less disastrous to the army of the invaders than the design which was originally in view could have been. Notwithstanding the conflagration, a considerable part of the city was still standing, and abounded in resources of all sorts for the army.* After the troops returned to the capital, immense stores of all sorts were discovered, which had been deposited in the innumerable

17.
Ruinous effect of the plunder of Moscow on the French army.

* Out of 6500 wooden houses, 2000 were standing; out of 2600 of stone, 526 had escaped the conflagration. Nearly four-fifths of the capital had perished.—BIGNON, xi. 120.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

cellars with which the city abounded, and thus escaped the conflagration. The magnitude of the booty which in this way came to be at their disposal daily proved more fatal to the discipline of the soldiers, while it in no degree relieved their real wants. Wine, brandy, and rice ; gold and silver vessels ; sumptuous apparel, rich silks, embroidered stuffs, superb pelisses and gorgeous draperies, were to be had in abundance ; but corn and forage there was none for the horses, though there was immense ammunition for the guns.* These were the real wants of the army, and they were in no degree relieved by the vast and rich stores which, when the conflagration ceased, were extracted from the cellars of the city. Thus the French suffered more from the continued occupation of Moscow than they could possibly have done from being obliged to abandon it ; for they found amidst its ruins luxuries which proved fatal to their discipline, while they did not obtain the stores necessary to their existence.¹

¹ Chamb. ii.
267, 316.
Fain, ii.
101, 137.

18.
Increasing
dangers
thence arising to the
French
position.

The eyes of the French army were now opened to the imminent danger which they had incurred in advancing to Moscow after the battle of Borodino, and how well founded had been the advice so strenuously given by Marshal Ney, to retire at once from that fatal field. To gain the victory on that occasion required the sacrifice of so large a portion of the army, and especially of the cavalry, that they were no longer able to keep the field, except in large masses. In proportion as the light troops of the enemy were augmented by the concourse of the nomad tribes from the eastern provinces of the empire, the shattered squadrons of France, which had escaped the carnage of Borodino, melted away before the fatigues and the dangers of incessant warfare. It was in vain, therefore, that above a hundred thousand veteran troops still

* "We have found in Moscow 2,000,000 cartridges, 300,000 pounds of powder, 300,000 of saltpetre and sulphur, and an immense quantity of cannon and balls. It is triple what we consumed in the last battle. We can now fight four such battles as Borodino."—*NAPOLÉON to GENERAL LARIBOISSIÈRE, 18th September 1812 ; FAIN, ii. 137.*

occupied the capital, and that a thousand pieces of cannon yet guarded the approaches to the Kremlin: this vast assemblage of armed men was in danger of perishing from its very numbers, for want of subsistence, in the midst of an exhausted country; this formidable train of artillery might soon become an unserviceable burden from the rapid destruction of the horses which conveyed it. The French infantry, like the Roman legions, would be powerless in the midst of the Scythian cavalry; and the disasters of Antony and Julian appeared about to be renewed in the midst of the solitudes of Russia.¹

CHAP.
LXXXIII.
1812.

¹ Guil. de
Vaud. 274.

Impressed with these ideas, a general feeling of disquietude filled the French army, and the more intelligent of the officers were seized with the most gloomy forebodings as to the fate of the army, if the stay at Moscow should be prolonged for any considerable time. So strongly impressed was one of the ablest of its officers with these dangers, that he has himself told us that he regarded the burning of Moscow as a fortunate event, as it was likely to render a stay in the heart of Russia impossible, and drive the Emperor, how unwilling soever, to a retreat.² Napoleon himself, though he had opened a negotiation with Kutusoff, from which he still hoped the happiest results, and constantly affirmed in public that peace was approaching, yet in private had his own misgivings on the subject; and he was well aware that if these attempts at a negotiation proved fruitless, he would be driven to the disastrous extremity of retiring to Poland. In the first days of October, only three weeks after he had entered the capital, he gave orders for evacuating the hospitals on Smolensko; and on the 6th of the same month he wrote to Berthier,³ strongly urging the adoption of the measures necessary for a retreat by Mojaïsk

19.
Napoleon's
early pre-
parations for
a retreat.

² Dumas,
Souv. iii.
450.

Oct. 2.

³ Fain, ii.
147, 148.
Dumas,
Souv. iii.
450.

* "Give instant orders to the generals commanding on the road to Smolensko, to make themselves masters of a circuit of ten leagues round their respective stations, and collect all the horses and carriages which they contain to convey our wounded. Charge the Duke of Abrantès, on his highest responsi-

CHAP.
LXXXIII.

1812.

20.

Extreme
difficulty
of keeping
open the
communica-
tion in his
rear.
Sept. 20.

and Wiazma to that city, and, above all, the clearing of the great road by Smolensko of the hostile partisans which now infested it.

In truth, however, the commands of Napoleon to keep his rear clear, and secure the communication with Smolensko, were more easily issued than obeyed; for the commander along the line to Wilna, notwithstanding all the pains he had taken to station troops in echelon along the whole road, was quite unable to keep off the enemy. The number and audacity of the parties who infested that vital artery soon became so excessive, that Baraguay d'Hilliers, who was in command at Wiazma, wrote to Berthier so early as the 26th September, that the strength of the partisans by whom he was surrounded was daily augmenting; that he was entirely destitute of provisions and ammunition, and could not exist unless a magazine were formed at his station; and that he was under the necessity of stopping the convoys for Moscow, to get food and ammunition for his own troops. Ten days afterwards he wrote that he was as completely blockaded at Smolensko as at Wiazma; that he had not troops sufficient to guard a single convoy; that the regiments which came up to join him from the Vistula were little better than skeletons, with almost all their officers dead; that without reinforcements the passage could no longer be kept open; that eight times the forces at his disposal were indispensable; and that, notwithstanding his urgent entreaties, he had not received a man to aid him in his efforts.¹

¹ Baraguay d'Hilliers to Berthier, Sept. 20 and 30, 1812. Chamb. iii. 280, 286.

21.

Alexander's
firm resolu-
tion not to
treat for
peace.

During this critical period, big with the fate of Russia and of the world, Napoleon was amused by the show of a negotiation, which, as already seen, he had opened with the Russian commander-in-chief. But, astute as he was, alike in the cabinet as the field, he here proved no match

bility, to evacuate the wounded here and at Kolotskoi on Wiazma; and the commander there to do the same on Smolensko."—NAPOLEON to BERTHIER, Oct. 16, 1812; FAIN, ii. 418.

for the diplomatic talent of the Russian generals, and suffered himself to be duped by that profound dissimulation, in all ages the mark of the Russian character, and which in an especial manner distinguished their gray-haired chief. Kutusoff's real object was to gain time till winter set in, and retreat became impossible, or obviously ruinous to the French army. But even the shadow of a negotiation, at so critical a period, was in the highest degree displeasing to the Emperor Alexander, who was no sooner informed of the reception of Lauriston at the Russian headquarters, and the commencement of an opening for conferences, than he wrote to Kutusoff, expressing his high displeasure at the proceeding, and his absolute command to "admit of no negotiation whatever, or relation tending towards peace with the enemy."¹*

CHAP.
LXXIII.
1812.

¹Chamb. ii.
208, 303.
Bout. ii.
131.

At length, on the 13th October, a shower of snow fell, and announced the approach of another danger of a still more formidable kind. At the same time, Kutusoff made the French lines re-echo with discharges of artillery, in celebration of the capture of Madrid by the English troops. In a proclamation addressed to his soldiers, he declared—"The campaign, finished on the part of the enemy, is only commencing on ours. Madrid has fallen. The hand of Omnipotence presses on Napoleon. Moscow will be his prison or his tomb: the grand army will perish with him: France will fall in Russia." Alarmed by the visible approach of winter, Napoleon at length made more serious preparations for his retreat. Orders were issued for the purchase of twenty thousand horses :

22.
First ap-
pearance of
snow. Na-
poleon pre-
pares to
retreat.
Oct. 13.

* "The report of Prince Michael Larionowitz has informed me of the conference you have had with the French aide-de-camp Lauriston. The conversations I had with you at the moment of your departure for the army intrusted to your care, have sufficiently made you aware of my firm resolution to avoid with the enemy every sort of negotiation or conference tending to peace. I now repeat in the most solemn manner, the same injunction; and it is my command that this resolution should be acted upon in the most rigorous and immovable manner. I have in like manner learned, with the most extreme displeasure, that General Benningsen has had a conference with the King of

CHAP.
LXXXII.

1812.

¹ Ségur, ii.
100, 103.
Chamb. ii.
217. Fain,
ii. 149, 157.
26th Bulletin.

the trophies of the Kremlin, the great cross of St Ivan, and the wounded, were directed to move upon Mojaïsk : the muskets of the wounded at Kolotskoi, and the caissons of the reserve, were ordered to be destroyed. The troops were commanded to be provided with forage and subsistence for a long march—a vain attempt in a country totally exhausted of resources, and in which he was hemmed in by a circle of enterprising enemies.¹

23.
Kutusoff's
picture of
the state of
his army.
Oct. 12.

Kutusoff, at this period, wrote in the most encouraging terms to the Emperor, on the immense advantages which he had derived from the position in front of the southern provinces, which he had so skilfully obtained :—" The army," said he, " is at rest, and daily receives reinforcements. The different regiments fill up their chasms, and complete their numbers, by means of recruits who daily arrive from the southern provinces, and who burn to measure their strength with the enemy. Abundant forage and good water have entirely re-established our cavalry. The troops experience no want of provisions. All the roads in our rear are covered with convoys of provisions coming from the most abundant provinces. Convalescent officers and soldiers daily rejoin their standards ; while the sick and wounded, nursed in the bosom of their country, enjoy the inestimable advantages of receiving the tender cares of their families. On the other hand, such is the state of disorganisation of the French army, that they are not in a condition to undertake anything against us. They can only obtain provisions with extreme difficulty ; all the prisoners concur in declaring that they have nothing but horse-flesh, and

Naples, and that too without any assignable motive. I now order you to make him acquainted with my high displeasure, and I require of you the most rigorous solicitude and watchfulness to prevent any such unauthorised step being taken by any of your generals or officers in future. All the instructions you have received from me—all the determinations contained in my orders—in a word, everything should conspire to convince you that my resolution is not to be shaken, and that at this moment no consideration on earth can induce me to terminate the war, or weaken the sacred duty of avenging our injured country.—ALEXANDER to KUTUSOFF, 9th Oct. 1812; CHAMB. ii. 304.

that bread is even more rare than butcher-meat. The artillery horses, and those of the cavalry, suffer immensely: the greater part of their dragoons perished in the battle of Borodino, and those which remain are fast melting away under the destructive attacks of our light horse. Hardly a day passes in which we do not make three hundred prisoners. The peasants, from the tops of their steeples, give signal of the enemy's approach, and join in attacking them. Such is their spirit, that numbers everywhere come forward demanding arms, and they inflict summary chastisement on the backward and deserters. The arm of the Most High is evidently upraised against our enemies. I have just received the account of the capture of Madrid by the Spaniards and English."¹

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Kutusoff to
Alexander,
Oct. 12,
1812.
Chamb. ii.
305, 307.

At length, having completed the reorganisation of his army, the Russian general resolved to resume offensive operations. The French advanced guard, under Murat and Poniatowski, thirty thousand strong, was posted in the neighbourhood of Winkowo, and kept so negligent a guard as to offer a tempting opportunity for a surprise. Nevertheless, the Russian commander hesitated at striking so important a blow, lest he should awaken Napoleon from his fancied security before the commencement of winter had rendered a regular retreat impracticable; but, when it became evident that the French army was about to retire, he no longer hesitated, and intrusted the execution of the attack to General Benningsen. The attacking force was divided into five columns. The first, under the command of Count Orloff Denisoff, was destined to turn the enemy's left, and cut off his retreat; the second, under the orders of General Bagawouth, supported by sixty pieces of cannon, was directed to attack the left, and support Count Orloff; Count Ostermann, with the third column, was ordered to maintain the communication with the two last columns, under the orders of Generals Doctoroff and Raeffskoi, which, with seventy-two pieces of cannon, were intended to attack the enemy

24.
Kutusoff
resumes
offensive
operations.
Oct. 17.

CHAP.
LXXXIII.

1812.

¹ Bout. ii.
140, 143.

25.
Successful attack
on Murat at
Winkowo.
Oct. 18.

in front, and prevent him from sending succour to the left, where the serious impression was expected to be made. To cover the whole movement, General Milarado-witch, with the advanced guard, was to remain in his old position till the fighting had commenced, when he was to support the column which led on the attack in front, and push on with Raefskoi towards Winkowo.¹

At seven in the evening of the 17th October, the attacking columns broke up from the camp at Tarutino, and marched during the night to the different stations assigned to them. The attack was intended to have been made at daybreak on the 18th; but the delays consequent on the march of so many detached bodies delayed the commencement of the battle till seven. The French, though taken by surprise, defended themselves bravely till the appearance of Count Orloff, in the rear of their left, threw the cavalry of Sebastiani into disorder, which soon communicated itself to their whole line. If the third column, destined to support Orloff, had been on their ground at the appointed time, the Russians might have seized the great road to Moscow, and entirely cut off the enemy's retreat; but the non-arrival of this corps having deprived him of the expected succour, Benningsen thought himself compelled to forego this immense advantage, and allow the enemy to retain possession of the road in their rear. Nevertheless, their retreat was conducted in such confusion, that fifteen hundred prisoners, thirty-eight pieces of cannon, forty caissons, and the whole baggage of the corps, fell into the hands of the victors, who had only to lament the loss of five hundred killed and wounded, including General Bagawouth, who was struck by a cannon-shot while bravely leading on his column. Had the third column arrived on its ground at the appointed time, or even had Benningsen acted with more vigour with the troops which had come up, the French corps would have been totally destroyed.² The capture of the baggage proved the extreme want which

² Jom. iv.
163. Bout.
ii. 144, 147.
Fain, ii. 158.
Chamb. ii.
212. Ségur,
ii. 106, 107.

prevailed in the French encampment. In the kitchen of Murat were found roasted cats and boiled horse-flesh.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

26.

Napoleon
marches
towards
Kalouga.

This disastrous intelligence reached Napoleon as he was reviewing the corps of Marshal Ney in the Kremlin, previous to its departure from Moscow. He instantly despatched couriers in every direction to direct the concentration of his troops ; a thousand orders were given in the course of the evening ; the fire of his youthful years reappeared in his visage. Before daybreak on the morning of the 19th, he left the Kremlin, exclaiming, " Let us march on Kalouga, and wo to those who interrupt our passage !" He left Moscow at the head of one hundred and three thousand combatants, six hundred pieces of cannon, and two thousand military chariots : an imposing force, and seemingly still capable of conquering the world. His infantry had increased by ten thousand men during his residence at the Kremlin ; partly from the recovery of the wounded, partly by the arrival of reinforcements from the west of Europe. But the most alarming diminution was perceptible in the cavalry : numerous corps of dismounted dragoons had been formed ; and those who were still on horseback had evidently the greatest difficulty in urging on their exhausted steeds. The long train of artillery was slowly dragged forward ; and it was obvious that, after a few days' march, the horses that moved it would sink under their fatigue.¹

Oct. 19.

¹ Ségur, ii.
106, 107,
112. Jom.
iv. 164.
Chamb. ii.
316. Fain,
ii. 161.
Clausewitz,
98.

In the rear of the still formidable mass of warriors marched a long and seemingly interminable train of chariots, waggons, and captives, bearing the pillage and riches of the devoted city. The trophies of imperial ambition, the cross of St Ivan, and the Persian and Turkish standards found in the capital, were mingled with the spoils of individual cupidity. The common soldiers strove to support the weight of Asiatic finery which they had ransacked from the ruins ; the carriages groaned under the load of Eastern luxuries, which the troops vainly hoped to carry with them to their own

27.

Strange
caravan
which fol-
lowed the
army.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

country. The followers of the camp, in number nearly forty thousand, of all nations and sexes, and clothed for the most part in the sumptuous dresses which they had obtained during the pillage, formed a motley train, whose clamours augmented the general confusion. In the chariots were many young Russian females, the willing slaves of their seducers, abandoning the country of which they were unworthy. In the midst of this fantastic train, which covered the country as far as the eye could reach, were to be seen columns of that redoubtable infantry which had borne the French standards in triumph through every capital of continental Europe, and which still preserved, amidst the motley group, its martial array. But the artillery-horses were already sinking under their fatigues; and the diminished regiments of the cavalry told too clearly how fatally the war had affected that important branch of the service. Confusion was soon apparent in the line of march: no human efforts could force along that stupendous array of artillery, caissons, baggage-waggons, and carts; the rearguard, in despair, passed on ere the whole had defiled before them, and quantities of rich booty were at every step abandoned to the enemy. The whole resembled rather a wandering caravan, or a roving nation, than an army of disciplined troops; and forcibly recalled to the imagination the predatory warfare of antiquity, when the northern barbarians returned to their deserts loaded with the spoils of conquered provinces.¹

¹ Chamb. ii.
316, 317.
Fain, ii.
161. Ségur,
ii. 113.
Jom. iv.
164. Lab.
249.

28.
Kutusoff
moves to bar
the passage
of Napoleon.

No sooner did he hear of the retreat of the French army from Moscow, than Kutusoff broke up from the camp at Tarutino at the head of eighty thousand regular troops, and thirty thousand militia or Cossacks. These irregular bands of horsemen, in the pursuit of a retreating army, were more serviceable than the *élite* of the Imperial Guard. The army was immediately marched towards Malo-Jaroslawitz, the strongest position on the new road from Moscow to Kalouga, in the hope of anticipating the

French Emperor in the occupation of that important position; while General Winzingerode, who lay in the neighbourhood of Klin, on the route to Tver, with ten thousand men, advanced towards Moscow. He marched without opposition through the ruined streets of the capital; but having imprudently approached the Kremlin to summon the garrison to surrender, he was made prisoner by Marshal Mortier, who commanded the French rearguard that still occupied its walls. Shortly afterwards, however, the invaders retired, leaving to the Russians the ancient palace of the Czars, armed by forty-two pieces of cannon; but, before his departure, the French general blew up a part of its venerable edifices by the express command of Napoleon—a despicable piece of revenge on the part of so great a commander, and singularly expressive of the envenomed state of his mind.¹

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Fain, ii.
169. Bout.
ii. 155.
Jom. iv.
166, 171.

Napoleon, after advancing on the 19th on the old road to Kalouga, which led straight to the Russian position of Tarutino, for some hours, turned suddenly to the right, and gained, by cross roads, the new route, which led to the same place by MALO-JAROSLAWITZ. This skilful manœuvre was concealed from the Russians by the corps of Marshal Ney, which continued slowly advancing towards the old position of Tarutino. In consequence, only Platoff, with fifteen regiments of Cossacks, was at first detached to Malo-Jaroslawitz, and the main body of the army did not move in that direction till the evening of the 23d. The corps of Doctoroff, by a rapid night march, reached that important position at five in the morning of the 24th, but found it already occupied by General Delzons, with two battalions of French infantry. These troops were immediately attacked and expelled from the town by the Russian chasseurs: the Viceroy, however, having come up shortly after with his whole corps, drove out the light troops of Doctoroff, but was in his turn compelled to yield to the vigorous attacks of the Russian infantry. The conflict which now ensued was one of the

29.
Advance of
Napoleon to
Malo-Jaros-
lawitz.

Atlas.
Plate 76.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Chamb. ii.
332. Bout.
ii. 157, 158.
Ségur, ii.
119, 130.
Fain, ii.
244, 245.

most desperate of the whole war, for both sides contended for an object vital to their respective empires, and generals and soldiers on either side were alike impressed with its importance. The French fought to open a way for their retiring army into the rich and hitherto untouched provinces of Tula and Kalouga; the Russians, to bar the way till the main army of Kutusoff, which was hastening up, arrived, which would force them back upon the wasted line of the Smolensko road, where famine and desolation would speedily involve them in destruction.¹

30.
Dreadful
conflict in
the town.

The continued and violent cannonade of the artillery on either side, which was from the first directed upon Malo-Jaroslawitz, early set the houses on fire, and, being all of wood, they burned fiercely, and soon the whole buildings were in flames. It was impossible to turn the town, as the hill on which it is situated is of a rapid declivity, shut in by wooded thickets on the right, and on the left the ground was furrowed by ravines. Thus the contending bodies were forced to fight in dense masses in the streets, and hand to hand there they combated the whole day with the most determined resolution. After Doctoroff had been driven out by Broussier and Guilleminot with the brave leading divisions of Eugene's corps, Raeffskoi with Kutusoff's advanced guard came up, and with loud shouts expelled the Italians. Eugene, however, advanced fresh troops: the division Pino, which was composed entirely of unbroken troops who had not combated since the commencement of the campaign, and the Royal Guard of Lombardy, were successively brought up. The combat continued with the utmost fury on both sides till evening; the burning town was taken and retaken seven different times; the rival nations fought with the bayonet in the midst of the burning houses. But at length the Viceroy succeeded in finally dislodging the enemy; and, after the most strenuous efforts, a way was opened for the French artillery through the streets.²

² Chamb. ii.
332. Bout.
ii. 157, 160.
Ségur, ii.
119, 120.

On came the guns at the gallop, the wheels crushing

the dead and the wounded, the horses goaded over heaps of human bodies, through a flaming pile formed by the burning houses on either side. At length the artillery were forced through the frightful defile, and planted in battery on the opposite side ; while Gerard's and Campans' divisions of Davoust's corps established themselves with great difficulty among the woods and ravines on either side. The heroic Russians, however, had not toiled and died in vain. During the action the army of Kutusoff gained the precious hours requisite to reach the other road : his columns during the whole day were seen, in two long dark lines, rapidly advancing towards the heights behind the scene of action, and before night they were firmly established on the wooded eminences in the rear of Malo-Jaroslavitz. The Viceroy, after a glorious combat, found himself master of a mass of bloody and smoking ruins, dearly purchased by the loss of five thousand of his best troops ; while one hundred thousand men, and seven hundred pieces of cannon, posted on a semicircle of wooded heights in his front, precluded the possibility of a farther advance towards Kalouga without a general battle.¹

The loss of the Russians was as great as that of the French ; and they had to lament the death of the brave General Dorokoff, who fell in an early period of the engagement. The ruins of Malo-Jaroslavitz exhibited the most terrible spectacle. The streets could be distinguished only by the heaps of dead who were piled upon each other ; while smoking buildings and half-consumed skeletons marked the position of the houses. From beneath these ruins the wounded occasionally dragged their wasted forms, and besought, with earnest cries, the passengers to put a period to their sufferings. Napoleon, notwithstanding his familiarity with scenes of this description, was startled at the sight ; and the proof it afforded of the determination of his enemies, contributed not a little to the resolution which he subsequently

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

31.

Which is at
length won
by the Vice-
roy.

¹ Bout. ii.
157, 161,
162. Ségur,
ii. 119, 121.
Chamb. ii.
332, 333.

32.

Results of
the battle,
and dreadful
appearance
of the field.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Jom. iv.
170, 171,
172. Bout.
ii. 163, 167.
Ségur, ii.
125, 132.
Lab. 264.

adopted. He had won this terrible field of battle ; but by the delay occasioned in wresting it from the enemy, he had substantially been defeated. The advantage gained by Kutusoff was of incalculable importance. By interposing his whole army between the enemy and Kalouga, and occupying the strong position behind the town, he compelled Napoleon either to fight at a great disadvantage, or renounce his projected march upon Kalouga, and fall back on the wasted line of the Smolensko road. Either of these alternatives was equivalent to a defeat ; and the event proved that in its consequences this bloody engagement was more disastrous to the French than any event which had befallen them since the commencement of the Revolution.¹

33.
Napoleon's
grievous
embarrass-
ment at this
result.

Napoleon remained in the neighbourhood of the field of battle the whole of the night of the 24th, and sent out numerous parties to reconnoitre the Russian position. The strength of the ground, in the opinion of his most experienced officers, precluded the possibility of a successful attack. No alternative remained but to fall back on the Smolensko road. The agitation of his mind, in consequence, became so excessive, that his attendants dared not approach him. Upon returning to his miserable cottage, he sent for Berthier, Murat, and Bessières. They sat round a table where was spread out a map of the country, and the Emperor spoke to them at first of the change which the arrival of Kutusoff on the high grounds beyond Malo-Jaroslavitz had made in his situation. After a little discussion, however, he became meditative ; and resting his cheeks on his hands, and his elbows on the table, his eyes fixed on the map, he remained for above an hour in moody silence, without motion or uttering a word. The three generals, respecting his mental agony, preserved silence, merely looking at each other during that long period ; then suddenly starting up, he dismissed them without making them acquainted with his resolution. Immediately after, however, he sent to

Davoust, ordering him to put himself at the head of the advanced guard, as he was to be at the outposts with his Guards at daybreak on the following morning. Ney, who was at a short distance, was directed to take a position between Borowsk and Malo-Jaroslawitz, after leaving two divisions to protect the reserve parks and baggage at the former of these towns.¹

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Chamb. ii.
334, 335.
Ségur, ii.
127, 129.

At daybreak on the 25th, he set out in person to examine the ground, and was advancing through a confused mass of baggage-waggons and artillery, when suddenly a tumult arose; the cry was heard, "It is Platoff—they are ten thousand!" and a large body of Cossacks was seen bearing directly down upon the imperial escort. It turned out to be the dreaded Hetman himself, at the head of ten regiments of Cossacks, who made a dash to seize a park of forty pieces of artillery stationed near the village of Gorodnia, where the headquarters of Napoleon were placed. The Emperor himself narrowly escaped being made prisoner: General Rapp was thrown down while bravely combating at his side, and his immediate attendants were compelled to use their sabres against the lances of the enemy. The squadrons on service who were in immediate attendance on the Emperor were pierced through and overthrown by the terrible lances of the Cossacks; numbers passed the Emperor in the confusion of the *mêlée*; and it was not till the grenadiers *à cheval* and the dragoons of the Guard appeared, that the irruption was stopped. The Cossacks, ignorant of the inestimable prize which was within their grasp, pushed on for the guns on which they were intent, and seized the whole: but they were only able to carry off eleven pieces, from the want of horses to convey them, and the rapid appearance of the cavalry of the Imperial Guard. Napoleon, after this humiliating incident, returned to Gorodnia, but again left it at ten o'clock, and advanced to Malo-Jaroslawitz.² According to his usual custom, he rode over the whole field which had been the theatre of such

34.
Napoleon is
nearly made
prisoner.

² Chamb. ii.
336, 337.
Fain, ii.
250, 251.
Ségur, ii.
131. Bout.
ii. 165.

CHAP.
LXXXIII.

1812.

25.
Delibera-
tions at the
French
headquar-
ters on the
course to be
pursued.

desperate strife on the preceding day, and moved on so as to see with his own eyes the elevated plateau which the Russian army, three quarters of a league in advance, still occupied. This done, he returned at five in the afternoon to Gorodnia, and nothing farther was attempted on either side that day.

This incident, however, was more than irritating : it proved the ruinous inferiority of the French to their enemies in light troops. Napoleon, in consequence, deemed it too hazardous to attempt to force the enemy's position, and returned pensively to his miserable habitation. An emperor, two kings, and three marshals were there assembled : upon their deliberations hung the destinies of the world. Murat, with his usual fire, recommended the boldest course. "Why should we fear the formidable position of the Russians ? Give me but the remains of the cavalry and that of the Imperial Guard, and I will plunge into their forests, and open the road to Kalouga at the sword's point." But Bessières, who commanded the cavalry of the Guard, and deemed its preservation essential to the Emperor's safety, immediately observed, "That the moment was passed, both in the army and in the Guard, for such efforts ; already the means of transport were beginning to fail, and the charge of Murat would be feebly supported. And who were the enemies against whom he proposed thus to risk a hazardous attack ? men who had evinced, in the combat of the preceding day, a heroism worthy of veteran soldiers, though they were recruits who had hardly learned the use of their arms. A *retreat* had become unavoidably necessary." The Emperor unwillingly acquiesced in the proposal, observing, "Hardihood has had its day : we have already done too much for glory : nothing remains to be thought of but the safety of the army." Davoust then proposed that "the retreat should be conducted by Medyn to Smolensko—a line of road hitherto untouched, and abounding in resources for the wounded : whereas the Mojaïsk

line was utterly wasted, and presented only dust and ashes." This advice was strongly resisted by Murat, who represented the extreme hazard of "exposing the flank of the army during so long a march to the attacks of the numerous light troops of the enemy." Napoleon adopted the opinion of the King of Naples, insisting upon the inability of the army from its weakness in cavalry to forage for itself, and the necessity of falling back on the magazines collected at Smolensko and Minsk ; and orders were issued for the retreat of the army by Borowsk and Mojaïsk to Smolensko.¹

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Ségur, ii.
137, 138.
27th Bulletin.
Bull.
iv. 148.

At daybreak on the 26th, the fatal retreat commenced ; and the victor in a hundred battles for the first time in his life RETIRED IN THE OPEN FIELD FROM HIS ENEMIES.* By a singular coincidence, the Russian troops at the same moment abandoned their position, and fell back in the direction of Kalouga. Both armies, struck with mutual awe, were flying from each other.† The reason assigned by Kutusoff for this singular measure was the inquietude which he felt for the road by Medyn to Kalouga ; but the adoption of it was a serious fault, which had nearly endangered all the advantages of the campaign. Meanwhile the French army, ignorant of the movements of the enemy, silently and mournfully continued its retreat. The most gloomy presentiments filled the minds of the soldiers ; experience had already made them acquainted with the length of deserts they had to

36.
A retreat is
resolved on.

Atlas,
Plate 73.

* At Aspern he retired from the field of battle, but held firm in the island of Lobau, close in its rear.

† It is a most singular circumstance that an event in both armies precisely similar had occurred near the same place several centuries before, at the same period of the year, on occasion of the last invasion of Russia by the Tartars :—
" L'armée Russe ne se retira pas—elle s'enfuit dans le plus grand désordre. Par miracle, dit la chronique, les Tartars, voyant la rive gauche de l'Ougra abandonnée par les Russes, s'imaginèrent que c'était une ruse de guerre, et que ceux-ci ne fuyaient que pour les provoquer au combat, et qu'ils avaient préparé des embûches : enfin le Khan, saisi d'une terreur panique, se hâta de s'éloigner. On vit alors un spectacle inconcevable : deux armées fuyant l'une de l'autre sans être poursuivies de personne. Les Russes s'arrêtèrent enfin ; mais le Khan se retira dans ses foyers, après avoir ruiné douze villes de Lithuanie. C'était à la fin d'Octobre : il survint de fortes gélées, et les Russes se

CHAP.
LXXIII.
1812.

traverse before reaching a friendly territory, and that on this long line of more than two hundred and fifty leagues, Smolensko and Minsk alone offered resources for their use. Dejection and despondency, in consequence, universally prevailed; the recklessness which arises from despair was already visible in many; and the discipline of the troops, accustomed to victory but unused to disaster, became relaxed from the moment that they began to retire before their enemies. Napoleon calculated chiefly upon the support of Victor, who, with above thirty thousand fresh troops, had been stationed since the beginning of September in the neighbourhood of Smolensko. This corps, joined to the reinforcements which were daily arriving from the westward, and the detached soldiers of the grand army who might be re-formed into battalions, would amount to fifty thousand men; and with such support he hoped to maintain the line of the Dwina till the return of spring. But the operations of Wittgenstein and Tchichagoff rendered this project impracticable; and, even without their assistance, the superiority of the Russians in cavalry would have rendered any position within their territory untenable for any length of time. The French retired by Borowsk to Vereva, where the Emperor's headquarters were established on the 27th. The weather was serene: it was still compared by Napoleon to the autumn at Fontainebleau.¹

¹ Bulletins, iv. 143, 20th and 27th Bull. Ségur, ii. 142, 145. Bout. ii. 168, 169.

As soon as Kutusoff was apprised of the enemy's

retirèrent afin de se mesurer avec le Khan *dans les champs de Borowsk*, plus favorables pour une grand bataille."—KARAMSIN, vi. 195. There is a most extraordinary similarity between the leading events of the Tartar and French contest, though they occurred in the former at far wider intervals than in the latter. In both, a great and glorious battle was fought on the same day, Sept. 7th, (Koulikoff and Borodino,) in which both parties claimed the victory: in both, a hundred and fifty thousand men were arrayed on each side: both were followed by the capture and burning of Moscow: the final and decisive struggle in both took place in the end of October, when the frost was beginning: in both, the two armies, at this crisis of the contest, mutually fled from each other. In the Tartar war, it was the Russians who retreated thither; and in both instances this singular event was the precursor of their final deliverance from their inveterate enemies.—See KARAMSIN, v. 78-83, and vi. 195.

retreat, he resolved, instead of pursuing them on the wasted line which they had adopted, to move the main body of his army by a parallel road towards Mojaïsk and Wiazma, and to harass their retreating columns by a large body of Cossacks and light troops. General Milaradowitch, in consequence, at the head of twenty-five thousand light troops, was directed to move along a road parallel and near to the great Smolensko route; while Platoff, with the Cossacks, pressed the French rearguard, and Kutusoff himself, at the head of the whole army, moved in two columns towards Wiazma. In the course of their retreat, the troops who moved first destroyed all the towns through which the army passed: Borowsk and Vereva shared the fate of Moscow. At the latter town the Emperor was joined by Marshal Mortier, who, after blowing up, as already mentioned, part of the Kremlin, had fallen back on the main army with his detachment. Winzingerode, made prisoner at the Kremlin, was then presented to the Emperor: his appearance excited one of those transports of rage which were not unusual in his irritable moods, but which happily passed away without actual violence to the Russian general.¹

The whole French army had regained the Smolensko road on the 29th. The corps marched at intervals of half a day's journey from each other, and for some days were not seriously harassed by the enemy. In passing through a heap of ruins, the soldiers recognised some features of a scene formerly known to them: the slopes, the redoubts gradually awakened thrilling emotions: it was Mojaïsk, formerly the scene of so dreadful a battle. The steeple alone remained in the midst of the desert:—

“Unheard the clock repeats its hours,
Cold is the hearths within their bowers;
Its echo and its empty tread
Would sound like voices from the dead.”*

They approached an open plain, and soon the multitudes of unburied dead, whose bones had begun to whiten in

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

37.

Kutusoff
moves in
pursuit on
a parallel
line.

¹ Bout. ii.
180, 181.
Jom. iv.
173. Ségur,
ii. 152, 153,
26th and
27th Bull.

38.
The French
repass the
field of
Borodino.

* CAMPBELL'S *Gertrude of Wyoming*.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

the sun—the broken and ruined redoubts which appeared at intervals—the rugged surface of the ground, which was still torn by the cannon-shot, announced the bloody field of Borodino.* Thirty thousand skeletons, innumerable fragments of helmets, cuirasses, and arms, broken guns, carriages, standards, and bloody uniforms, formed the sad remains of that scene of glory. The soldiers, in passing, gazed in silence at the great redoubt, so lately the theatre of mortal strife, now marked by the stillness and desolation of an extinguished volcano: regret for the loss of their companions in arms was mingled with the painful sense of the fruitlessness of the sacrifice; and they hurried past the scene of desolation with melancholy recollections of the past, and gloomy anticipations of the future.^{1†}

¹ Lab. 275,
276. Ségur,
ii. 160.
Bout. ii.
173, 182.
Fain, ii.
117.

39.
Woful spec-
tacle ex-
hibited on
passing the
abbey of
Kolotskoi.
Disorders
which al-
ready ap-
peared in
the retreat.

In passing the great abbey of Kolotskoi, the army received a lamentable addition to its numbers in a multitude of wounded men, who had escaped from that scene of horror to join their retreating companions. Thousands had perished in the hospital from the total inadequacy of the means of relief to the prodigious accumulation of wounded who had been left: but a greater number than could have been expected had been saved, in consequence of the heroic and skilful efforts of the French surgeons. These miserable men crawled to the side of the road, and, with uplifted hands and lamentable cries, besought their comrades not to leave them to the horrors of famine or the fury of the enemy. At the distance of two leagues from Mojaïsk, five hundred of them, in the extremity of

* “Semiruto vallo, humili fossâ, accisæ jam reliquæ consedissee intelligebantur: medio campi, albertia ossa, ut fugerant, ut restiterant, disjecta vel aggerata; adjacebant fragmina telorum, equorumque artus, simul truncis arborum. * * * Romanus qui aderat, exercitus, trium legionum ossa, nullo noscente, alienas reliquias an suorum humo tegetet, omnes, ut conjunctos ut consanguineos, aucta in hostem ira, mœsti simul et infensi condebant.”—TACITUS, *Annal.* i. 62.

† Lamentable cries were heard from one of the heaps of slain: they proved to come from a wounded soldier who had crept into the half-consumed remains of a dead horse, and contrived to support existence in that situation for above six weeks.—SÉGUR, ii. 160.

suffering, had collected round a deserted barn : for several days they had received no food : an officer and twenty-five men were on the spot to guard them, and two surgeons were in attendance to dress their wounds ; but the former had no food to give them, and the latter no linen or salves to apply to their mangled limbs. Napoleon made the greatest efforts to get them the means of conveyance : but the troops, whom misery had already begun to render selfish, murmured at displacing the spoils of Moscow for their bleeding companions, and could with difficulty be constrained to give them a place in their chariots. Although only a few Cossacks as yet harassed the rear of the retreating army, the discouragement of the troops had become very great, and the dreadful features of the retreat already began to appear. Baggage-carts were abandoned at every step, from the failure of the horses which drew them ; the infantry and cavalry marched pell-mell in the utmost confusion ; and the incessant explosions along the whole line, demonstrated how many of the ammunition-waggons required to be sacrificed to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy. The retreat was rapidly becoming a flight ; the troops were beginning to separate from the marching columns in quest of plunder or subsistence ; and numbers of horses were slain to furnish food for the hungry multitudes who surrounded them.¹

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Bout. ii.
183. Lab.
280, 283.
Ségur, ii.
164, 165.
Fain, ii.
118, 120.
Chamb. iii.
252.

On the 2d November, the headquarters reached Wiazma. The Emperor flattered himself that he had got the start of Kutusoff by several marches, and that his troops would not be disquieted by the enemy during the remainder of the retreat ; but this delusive quiet was not of long continuance. On approaching that town, the corps of Davoust, which formed the rearguard of the army, found, on the 3d, the advanced guard of Milaradowitch posted on the southern side of the great road, while Platoff, with a large body of Cossacks, pressed the rear of the army. The Emperor, with the Guard and the first corps of the army, was already advanced on the road to Smolensko,

40.
Severe ac-
tion at
Wiazma.
Nov. 2.

CHAP.
LXXXIII.

1812.

¹ Bout. ii.
184, 188.
Chamb. iii.
263, 265.
Ségur, ii.
177, 179.
Lab. 293.

41.
Defeat of
Davoust
there.

and the corps of the Viceroy and Davoust alone remained to resist the attack. By a vigorous charge, the Russian cavalry, under Wassilchikoff, in the first instance broke in upon the line of the French retreat, and established themselves astride on the great road, in the interval between the corps of the Viceroy and that of Davoust; while Platoff, the moment that the cannonade commenced, attacked the rear of the latter at Federowskoi. If the whole corps of Milaradowitch had been at hand to support his cavalry while the Cossacks pressed the rear, the corps of Davoust must have been totally destroyed. But the infantry, unable to keep pace with the rapid advance of the cavalry, was still far behind; and General Wassilchikoff was left, for more than half an hour, to resist alone all the efforts of the enemy to dislodge him from his position.¹

Meanwhile the Viceroy, hearing of the danger of Davoust's corps, retraced his steps and drew back his advanced guard, which had already reached Wiazma, to the scene of danger. Milaradowitch, in his turn, was now severely pressed between the advancing troops of Davoust and the returning corps of Eugene: but he bravely maintained his post near the great road till the infantry of Prince Eugene of Würtemberg came up to his support. But the moment of decisive success had passed ere the latter arrived at the scene of danger. Davoust, with admirable presence of mind, had contrived to get his artillery and baggage across the fields in the neighbourhood of Wassilchikoff's men during the continuance of the action; and the united French corps were now intent only on securing their retreat to Wiazma. In doing so, however, they were keenly pursued by Milaradowitch, who was by this time supported both by his own infantry and by the Cossacks of Platoff; a numerous artillery thundered on their retreating columns; and though the soldiers of the Viceroy still kept their ranks, those of Davoust, exhausted by the fatigues of the retreat, fell into confusion.

At this critical moment, the vanguard of Kutusoff beyond Wiazma was heard to commence a cannonade on the corps of Ney, which was in advance of the Viceroy ; and the troops, conceiving themselves beset on all sides, fell back in disorder into Wiazma. General PASKEWITCH,* at the head of his brave division, rushed into the town, and drove the enemy through the streets at the point of the bayonet. In the midst of the general confusion, the houses took fire, which stopped the pursuit ; and the shattered corps of Davoust, in their bivouacs beyond the walls, counted their diminished ranks and re-formed their battalions by the light of the conflagration.¹

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Ségur, ii.
177, 179.
Bout. ii.
185, 189,
192. Lab.
293. Fain,
ii. 121, 125.
Chamb. iii.
263, 269.

In this engagement the French were weakened by full six thousand men, of whom two thousand were made prisoners, while the loss of the Russians did not exceed two thousand. The corps of Davoust had before the battle lost ten thousand men by fatigue or desertion since the retrograde movement commenced at Malo-Jaroslawitz ; and twenty-seven pieces of their artillery had fallen into the hands of the enemy : so that they were now sixteen thousand weaker than on leaving Moscow. The army in all had lost forty-three thousand men since the retreat began ; it was now only sixty thousand strong. Two hundred and forty thousand men had perished, therefore, in the centre under Napoleon's immediate command, before a fall of snow took place : for it crossed the Niemen, including Jerome's army, three hundred thousand strong.

42.
Results of
the battle.
Kutusoff
fails to push
the advan-
tage to the
utmost.
Ney com-
mands the
French rear-
guard.

* Paskewitch, a Russian by birth, of an old noble family, was born in 1772, and had served with distinction in the wars against the Turks, the Poles, and the Swedes. Like Suwarroff and Kutusoff, he was endeared to the soldiers by being a native of the country, and a strenuous supporter, whenever it was possible, of national interests and customs. He possessed an intuitive genius for war, and rose in the sequel to the highest destinies, having mainly contributed, by his two successful campaigns in Asia Minor, to the glorious peace of Adrianople with the Turks, and brought the Polish war to a successful issue, after Diebitsch had signally failed, by the storming of Warsaw in 1831. He subsequently commanded the great Russian army, which took part in and terminated the Hungarian war in 1849. Few Russian generals will leave a more distinguished place in history, or have more signally contributed, by their genius and energy, to advance the fortunes of their country.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

When the troops resumed their march on the following day, they were astonished at the smallness of their numbers. There seems to be no room for doubt, that had Kutusoff supported by a sufficient force the bold advance of Milaradowitch, or hastened his own march so as to anticipate the French vanguard at Wiazma, he would have had every chance of destroying a great part of their army ; and his own troops were grievously disappointed at the opportunity being allowed to escape. But the Russian commander, knowing the severity of the season which was about to commence, and the multiplied obstacles which were preparing to arrest the retreat of Napoleon, deemed, and perhaps wisely, that the surer course was to let the enemy waste away before the cold of winter, before he attempted to envelop the main body ; and to confine his attacks at present to the rearguard, whose fatigues had already reduced them to that state of debility which might soon be expected to become general in the whole army. The corps of Davoust, which had suffered so severely, was now replaced by that of Marshal Ney as the rearguard ; and this heroic general began to cover that retreat, fatal to so many others, immortal to him. On the 4th and 5th the retreat continued, and in passing the Lake of Semlevo, the grand cross of Ivan and the armour of the Kremlin, the spoils of Moscow, were buried in the waves. Already the French perceived that the season for preserving trophies was gone for ever.¹

¹ Clausewitz, 98, 99.
Ségur, ii.
165, 168.
Bout. ii.
193, 195.

43.

Commence-
ment of the
great frosts,
and appear-
ance of the
atmosphere.
Nov. 6.

The weather, though cold and frosty at night, had hitherto been clear and bright during the day ; and the continued, though now level and powerless sun, had cheered the hearts of the soldiers. But on the 6th November the Russian winter set in with unwonted severity. Cold fogs first rose from the surface of the ground, and obscured the heretofore unclouded face of the sun ; a few flakes of snow next began to float in the atmosphere, and filled the army with dread : gradually the light of day declined, and a thick murky darkness

overspread the firmament. The wind soon after rose and ere long blew with frightful violence, howling through the forests, or sweeping over the plains with resistless fury : the snow fell in thick and continued showers, which soon covered the earth with an impenetrable clothing, confounding all objects together, and leaving the army to wander in the dark through an icy desert.* Great numbers of the soldiers, in struggling to get forward, fell into hollows or ditches which were concealed by the treacherous surface, and perished miserably before the eyes of their comrades : others were swallowed up in the moving snow-hills, which, like the sands of the desert, preceded the blast of death. To fall was certain destruction : the severity of the tempest speedily checked respiration ; and the snow, accumulating round the sufferer, soon formed a little sepulchre for his remains. The road, and the fields in its vicinity, were rapidly strewn with these melancholy eminences ; and the succeeding columns found the surface rough and almost impassable from the multitude of these icy mounds that lay upon their route.¹†

¹ Lab. 299,
300. Ségur,
ii. 181.
Chamb. ii.
274. Fain,
ii. 138, 140.

Accustomed as the soldiers had been to death in its ordinary forms, there was something singularly appalling in the uniformity of the snowy wilderness, which, like a vast winding-sheet, seemed ready to envelop the remains of the whole army. Exhausted by fatigue, or pierced by

* “*Ventum erat ad iter perpetuis obsitum nivibus, quas frigoris vis gelu adstrinxerat. Locorum squalor et solitudines inviæ fatigatum militem terrebant humanarum rerum terminos se videre credentem. Omnia vasta, atque sine ullo humani cultûs vestigio, attoniti intuebantur ; et antequam lux quoque et cœlum ipsos deficerent, reverti jubebant.*”—QUINTUS CURTIUS, v. 6, 13.

† Precisely the same circumstances of horror had overtaken the army of Alexander the Great in crossing the Caucasus :—“*Penitus hieme defossæ latent : cum, nive discussâ, aperiri humus cœpit, cœlo solique redduntur. Cæterum adeo altæ nives premunt terram, gelu et perpetuo pæne rigore constrictæ, ut ne avium quidem, feræve ullius, vestigium exstet. Obscura cœli verius umbra, quam lux, nocti similis, premit terram ; vix ut, quæ prope sunt, conspici possint. In hac tamen omnis humani cultûs solitudine destitutus exercitus, quidquid malorum tolerari potest, pertulit ; inopiam, frigus, lassitudinem, desperationem.*”—QUINTUS CURTIUS, vii. c. 3.

CHAP.
LXXXIII.

1812.

44.

Dreadful
depression
produced
thereby on
the minds
of the
soldiers.¹ Guil. de
Vaud. 284.
Ségur, ii.
182. Lab.
300.

cold, they sank by thousands on the road, casting a last look upon their comrades, and pronouncing with their dying breath the names of those most dear to them. Clouds of ravens, like the birds which are only seen at sea when a shipwreck is at hand, issued from the forests, and hovered over the dying remains of the soldiers ; while troops of dogs, which had followed the army from Moscow, driven to fury by suffering, howled in the rear, and often fell upon their victims before life was extinct. The only objects that rose above the snow were the tall pines, whose gigantic stems and funereal foliage cast a darker horror over the scene, and seemed destined to mark the grave of the army amidst the deathlike uniformity of the wilderness.¹

45.

Increasing
distresses of
the troops.

The weight of their arms soon became intolerable to the least robust of the soldiers : their fingers frequently dropped off while holding their muskets, and the useless load was thrown aside in the struggle for the maintenance of life.* Amidst the general ruin, multitudes left their ranks, and wandered on the flanks or rear of the army, where they were speedily massacred by the peasants, or made prisoners by the Cossacks. But the troops now felt the consequences of their former licentiousness, or of the necessities to which they had been exposed by the reckless advance of the Emperor. The whole country, to the breadth of seven or eight leagues on either side of the great road, had been laid waste during the advance of the army, and the exhausted soldiers were now unable to reach the limits of their former devastation. By a degree of reckless violence, also, of which it is difficult to form a conception, the first columns of the army destroyed, along the whole line of the retreat, the few remaining houses which had survived the march in summer ; and the rearguard, in consequence, suffered as much from the madness of their comrades who preceded,

* "De tous côtés les mains glacées de nos soldats laissent tomber leurs armes."—FAIN, ii. 295. (An eye-witness.)

as the hostility of their enemies who followed them. Fire was before them with its ashes ; winter followed them with its horrors. The horses of the cavalry and artillery, especially those which came from France and Germany, suffered dreadfully from the severity of the cold, which the entire want of provisions rendered them unable to bear. In less than a week after it commenced, thirty thousand had perished. Caissons and cannon were abandoned at every step : the ascent from a stream, or the fall of a bridge, occasioned the abandonment of whole parks of artillery. Famished groups threw themselves upon the dead bodies of the horses to satisfy the cravings of nature ; and in many instances even the repugnance of our nature at human flesh was overcome by the pangs of protracted hunger.¹

CHAP.
LXXIII.
1812.

¹ Bout. ii.
198. Ségur,
ii. 171, 182,
183. 29th
Bulletin,
Bull. iv.
158.

Night came, but with it no diminution of the sufferings of the soldiers. Amidst the howling wilderness, the wearied men sought in vain for the shelter of a rock, the cover of a friendly habitation, or the warmth of a fire. The stems of the pine, charged with snow and hardened by frost, long resisted the flames lighted by the troops ; and when, by great exertions, the fire was kindled, crowds of starving men prepared a miserable meal of rye, mixed with snow-water and horse-flesh. Sleep soon closed their eyelids, and for sixteen long hours the darkness was illuminated by the light of the bivouacs. But numbers never awoke from their slumbers ; and on the following day the sites of the watch-fires were marked by circles of dead bodies, with their feet still resting on the extinguished piles.* The death produced upon almost all the soldiers

46.
Effect of
these suffer-
ings on the
minds of the
soldiers.

* It is seldom that cold at all comparable to that which is here described, is felt in the British islands ; but, during the great frost of spring 1838, the author was twice fortunate enough to experience it. On the 5th and 9th February in that year, the thermometer, at his residence at Possil House, near Glasgow, fell, at eleven at night, to four degrees below zero of Fahrenheit ; and he immediately walked out and sat down under the old trees in the park, to experience a sensation which he had long figured to himself in imagination, and might never in life feel again. A vivid recollection of the descriptions he had studied of the Russian retreat, made him attend minutely

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Larrey,
Mem. de
Chirurg.
Mil. iv. 91.
Ségur, ii.
184. Lab.
300. Chamb.
ii. 382, 384.

who perished from the cold was the same. The persons affected fell into a state of paralytic torpor, which led them to approach the fires of the bivouacs, where they speedily dropped into an apoplectic slumber, from which they never wakened. Those of the officers and men who were able to perform the whole journey, and had preserved a little sugar and coffee, resisted the cold most effectually. Mortification in particular limbs ensued in innumerable cases, against which the best preservative was found to be walking on foot.¹ * \

47.
Dreadful
selfishness
which uni-
versally ap-
peared.

Upon the great body of the men, the continuance of these horrors produced the usual results of recklessness, insubordination, and despair. The French soldiers, more susceptible than any others of lively impressions, early perceived the full extent of their danger, and became desperate from the accumulation of perils from which they could perceive no possibility of escaping. Everything seemed allowable when there was no other mode of preserving life. The men tore off the cloaks from their

to every object he witnessed, and every sensation he felt on the occasion. The night was bright and clear: not a speck or film obscured the firmament, where the moon shone forth in surpassing splendour; the trees, loaded with glowing crystals, glittered on all sides as in a palace of diamonds; the snow, dry and powdery, fell from the feet like the sand of the desert; not a breath waved even the feathery covering of the branches; and the mind, overpowered with the unwonted splendour of the scene, fell into a state of serene enjoyment. The sensation of the frost, even when sitting still, was hardly that of pain. The moment the body entered the external air, it felt as if plunged into a cold bath, against which it was at once evident that even the warmest clothing afforded little protection; and, after resting a short time, a drowsy feeling, the harbinger of death, began to steal over the senses. When walking, however, the circulation was preserved, and no disagreeable feeling experienced; but the astonishment felt at the moment, upon experiencing how soon inaction induced drowsiness, was how, under a much severer cold, any men or horses survived in either army, during the bivouacs of the Russian retreat.

* "*Multos exanimavit rigor insolitus nivis; multorum adussit pedes: plurimorum oculis præcipue perniciabilis fuit. Fatigati quippe, in ipso gelu deficientia corpora sternebant; quæ, cum moveri desissent, vis frigoris ita adstringebat, ut rursus ad surgendum conniti non possent. A commilitonibus torpentes excitabantur: neque aliud remedium erat, quam ut ingredi cogerentur. Tum demum, vitali calore moto, membris aliquis redibat vigor.*"—*QUINTUS CURTIUS*, vii. c. 3. The eloquent descriptions of the sufferings of Alexander's soldiers might pass for those which overtook the followers of Napoleon.

comrades who had sunk down, to warm their own shivering limbs. Those who first got round the fires at night, sternly repelled the succeeding crowds who strove to share in the warmth, and saw them with indifference sink down and die in the frigid outer circle. In the general ruin, the sympathies and generous feelings of our nature were for the most part extinguished : the strong instinct of self-preservation concentrated, in these terrible moments, every one's energies on his own safety ; and the catastrophes of others were unheeded, when all anticipated similar disasters for themselves. Some, however, of a firmer character, resisted the contagion, and preserved, even amid the horrors that surrounded them, the gaiety and serenity of indomitable minds.¹

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Ségur, ii.
184, 185,
191. Lab.
300, 303.
Fain, ii.
287. Chamb.
ii. 382, 384.
Larrey, iv.
91.

In the midst of these unparalleled horrors, the rapid disorganisation of the army seemed the prelude to its entire destruction. The road, trodden down by such an innumerable multitude of feet, and rolled over by such a number of wheels, became as hard and slippery as ice itself. In that rigorous latitude, where this state of things annually returns, and continues five months, the horses of the Russians are all rough-shod, the waggons are placed upon sledges, and the light cannon are put on carriages mounted on the same vehicles. But no precautions of this description had been thought of in the French army : the shoes of none of the horses were frosted, nor were any means provided for their being so ; and numbers of the unhappy animals slipping, and falling on their knees at every step, became exhausted with fatigue, and sank down on the ice to rise no more. The want of forage or provisions at the same time weakened those which kept their feet, to such a degree that they became unable to resist the effect of the night bivouacs.*

48.
Disastrous
effects of the
cold on the
army.

* "Les chevaux supportent très-bien la bivouac et les froids les plus rigoureux quand ils sont bien nourris. *Ce n'était pas le froid qui les avait fait mourir, mais la faim et la continuité des marches.* La Garde ayant reçu quelques distributions de farine, il restait encore deux mille hommes de cavalerie de la Garde, mais en mauvais état."—CHAMBRAY, ii. 380, 383.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Chamb. ii.
381, 382.

49.
Ruinous
effect of the
want of pro-
visions for
men and
horses.

It was this, and not the cold, which proved fatal to the horses; for, if well fed, a horse can withstand the severest cold as well as the strongest man. The regiments which had hitherto succeeded in preserving a few animals, by means of pasture picked up in the fields on the roadside, now found them at once destroyed by the snow covering the ground; for magazines, or distributions of rations, there were none, either for men or horses, from Moscow to Smolensko, a distance of nearly three hundred miles.¹

It was the incessant fatigue and want of provisions, more even than the cold, which at this period of the retreat, and indeed during its whole continuance, proved fatal to the French army. The troops, marching without intermission, and never receiving any distribution of rations, soon found themselves a prey to the horrors of famine, and were reduced, as their sole means of subsistence, to use the flesh of the numerous horses which dropped down by the wayside. The instant that one of these wretched animals fell, a famished group siezed upon it, and shared its remains among them. The army subsisted almost entirely, for weeks together, on this melancholy resource; and, much as Napoleon lamented the destruction of these animals, his condition, had they survived, would have been still worse, for in that case the whole men must have perished. But these disastrous circumstances, and, above all, the evident hopelessness of their situation, from the knowledge that there were no magazines on the line of retreat over a space of five hundred miles, except at Smolensko and Minsk, produced the most depressing effect upon the minds of the soldiers. Despair and recklessness made them desert their standards in crowds; before they reached Smolensko, the army generally * had lost all appearance of a regular array, and presented a hideous mass of stragglers,² clothed in fur-cloaks and

² Chamb. ii.
382, 383.

* The Guards were an exception; they were better provided for, and kept their ranks to the last.—CHAMBRAY, ii. 385.

other finery, which they had plundered from Moscow, or reft from their dead comrades who had perished on the road.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

No one who had not witnessed it, could credit the universal hardness of heart which prevailed. The strongest bonds of gratitude, the oldest ties of friendship, were snapped asunder. Self-preservation became the universal object. The dying closed their eyes with curses and imprecations on their lips; the living passed unheeding by. The few prisoners taken at Malo-Jaroslawitz and Wiazma were shot without mercy when they could march no more. In the midst of the general distress, the marshals, generals, and higher administrators, who had taken the precaution to bring provisions for themselves and their horses with them from Moscow, lived in comparative abundance; and the contrast thus afforded to their own destitute condition, augmented the rage and indignation of the soldiers. They broke out into as vehement and impassioned complaints against, as they had formerly breathed adulation towards, Napoleon: his ambition, his obstinacy, his pride, were in every mouth; he had penetrated to Moscow contrary to all the rules of war; he had ruined himself, and them all with him. The Emperor himself marched on foot, grave, but calm and collected; his appearance was that of a great mind contending with adversity.¹

50.
General indignation
against
Napoleon.

¹ Chamb. ii.
384, 385.
Fain, ii.
287.

In the midst of these sufferings the army arrived at Dorogobouge. The imperial columns and the corps of Davoust, after a short rest, proceeded on the road to Smolensko; while the corps of Eugene was directed to move towards the north, in order to assist Oudinot, who was severely pressed by Count Wittgenstein. Ney, with his corps, now severely weakened by the fatigues of the retreat, was still intrusted with the perilous duty of protecting the rear; but he never failed in its performance—discharging at one time the functions of an able commander, displaying at another the courage of a simple

51.
Continuance of the
retreat to
Dorogobouge.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Ségur, ii.
187. Bout.
ii. 198.

grenadier. In his reports to Napoleon, he portrayed in true colours the frightful condition of the army ; but in the field he was always to be found with the rearguard, combating with as much alacrity, though a marshal and prince of the empire, as when he was a private soldier in the Revolutionary army.¹

52.

Disasters of
the Viceroy
in his re-
treat.

The Viceroy, in advancing towards the Dwina from Dorogobouge, met with a succession of disasters. Before arriving at the banks of the Wop, he had been compelled to abandon sixty-four pieces of cannon and three thousand detached soldiers to his pursuers ; but on the margin of that stream a new difficulty awaited him. The bridge which he had ordered to be constructed could not be raised, and his troops were obliged to cross the stream amidst floating masses of ice, with the water up to their middles. All the efforts of the artillerymen could not obtain a passage for the cannon, and, in consequence, the whole remaining artillery and all the baggage of the corps were abandoned to the Cossacks. The bivouac of the following night was eminently disastrous : the troops, soaking with the water of the Wop, sought in vain for shelter, and multitudes perished from the freezing of their wet garments round their exhausted limbs. On the snow around them was to be seen the plunder which could no longer be dragged along : the riches of Paris and Moscow lay scattered on an unknown strand, amidst the dead and the dying. This terrible night effected the total disorganisation of the corps ; and, to complete his misfortunes, the Viceroy, on arriving the following day at Doukhowstchina, found that town already occupied by two regiments of Cossacks. But in these critical circumstances he did not lose his presence of mind. Forming the Italian Guard and a few squadrons of cavalry, which still preserved their horses, into a square, he attacked and carried the town ; ² and finding that a retreat in the direction of Witepsk would expose his detached corps to certain destruction, he made in all

² Bout. ii.
205, 207.
Ségur, ii.
196, 201.
Lab. 308,
312.

haste for Smolensko, where he arrived with the scanty and shattered remains of his troops on the 13th November, and found the other corps of the French army already assembled.

CHAP.
LXXXIII.

1812.

Meanwhile, the main Russian army, still advancing in two columns, was moving in the chord of the arc of which Napoleon was describing the curve. They advanced by Jelnia to Tchelkanowo, where the headquarters were established on the 12th, on the road leading from Smolensko to Roslawl; and thus threatened the communications of the French army, and precluded the possibility of their remaining in the former town. By following this route, Kutusoff not only got the start of his enemies, and compelled them to continue a disastrous retreat, after they hoped to have arrived at its termination; but had the immense advantage of quartering his troops under cover in the villages, in a country as yet unwasted by war, during the severity of the winter nights. The march of the army was so rapid, that several detached bodies of the French, who had not yet received orders to retreat, fell into their hands. In particular, the advanced guard of General Baraguay d'Hilliers, under General Augereau, with two thousand men, were made prisoners by Count Orloff Denisoff and Colonel Davidoff, who preceded the main body of the army with their light troops; and a depot of one thousand three hundred men was captured at Klemenstiewo by another corps of partisans under Colonel Bistrom.¹

53.
Movements
of Kutusoff
in his paral-
lel march at
this time.

¹ Bout. ii.
201, 203.
Ségur, ii.
236.
Chamb. ii.
391, 393.

Between Dorogobouge and Smolensko, Napoleon received intelligence of the conspiracy of Malet at Paris, of which a full account will shortly be given, and by which a few daring men for some hours gained possession of the seat of government, made prisoner the chief of the police, and had nearly overturned the imperial government. He now perceived on what a sandy foundation his fortunes were rested, even in France itself, and exclaimed to Daru, "What if we had remained at

54.
Napoleon
receives in-
telligence of
Malet's con-
spiracy at
Paris.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

Moscow !” From that moment his whole thoughts were concentrated on the French capital ; and all the disasters of his present situation could hardly withdraw his impassioned imagination from the convulsions which he anticipated in the centre of his power. Even this alarming intelligence, however, the numerous reverses of which he daily received accounts from his lieutenants, the gloomy future before him, the spectacle of the dead and the dying continually before his eyes, produced no visible impression on his manner or countenance. With the same stoical insensibility, he traversed the ranks of frozen soldiers which lined the road, as he would have done the rocks of Switzerland, or the sphinxes of Thebes. Yet no one knew better the disasters of the army ; at that very moment, he was writing to Victor that the horses of the army had all perished, and that its salvation depended on his own exertions.¹*

¹ Ségur, ii.
188, 189.
Fain, ii.
285.
Chamb. ii.
380, 417,
418.

55.
Arrival of
the corps at
Smolensko.
Nov. 9-13.

The successive arrival of the different corps at Smolensko, where they continued to drop in from the 9th to the 13th, presented the most dismal spectacle. At the sight of the long-wished-for towers, the soldiers could no longer restrain their impatience : the little remaining discipline instantly gave way, and officers and privates, infantry and cavalry, precipitated themselves in a promiscuous mass upon the gates. The famishing troops rushed into the streets, and the gates of the magazines were instantly surrounded by crowds, demanding, with earnest cries, the food which they had so long been promised. Bread, in sufficient quantities, could not be furnished : large sacks of corn were thrown out to the applicants, and the miserable soldiers fought with each other for a few pounds of dried roots or grain.² The

² Fain,
ii. 273.
Chamb. ii.
418. Gourg.
ii. 172.
Ségur, ii.
205.

* “The army and the Emperor will be to-morrow at Smolensko, but much fatigued by a march of one hundred and twenty leagues without stopping. Resume the offensive : *The salvation of the army depends on it* : a single day’s delay may occasion a frightful calamity. The cavalry of the army is all on foot : the cold has killed all the horses : march ! it is the order of the Emperor and of necessity.”—NAPOLEON to VICTOR, 7th Nov. 1812 ; CHAMBRAY, ii. 379.

Old and New Guard alone preserved their ranks in the midst of the general confusion; and their steadiness seemed in some degree to justify that indulgence to their sufferings which excited such violent dissatisfaction among the other troops.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

The Emperor had made the greatest exertions to provide magazines, though at fearfully long intervals, along part of the line of his retreat. Immense quantities of provisions had been collected at Smolensko, Minsk, and Wilna; gigantic efforts had been made to transport them to the places of their destination: the roads of Germany and Italy were covered by herds of cattle and trains of waggons hastening to the theatre of war. But all these preparations were insufficient; the arrival of the convoys was retarded by the state of the roads, which the passage of so many thousand carriages had rendered almost impassable: the oxen sank under the fatigues of their lengthened marches, and the impatience of those who drove them: the stores of grain, however immense, could not suffice for the number of sick and isolated men who were left in the rear of the army, and the famished multitude who arrived from Moscow. The genius and foresight of Napoleon had not been wanting; the most minute orders had been forwarded to the authorities in the rear, to provide for the wants of the army between Smolensko and Wilna; but everything failed, because the magnitude of his demands outstripped the powers of human exertion. But from Moscow to Smolensko, nothing whatever had been provided, and hence the early disasters of the retreat. It was the dreadful battle of Malo-Jaroslawitz which induced them, by throwing the army upon a line of retreat which had never been contemplated.¹

56.
Vain efforts
of Napoleon
to provide
magazines
along his
line of
retreat.

¹ Napoleon
to Victor,
Oct. 6,
1812.
Fain, ii.
293. Ségur,
ii. 205, 210,
211. Jom.
iv. 180.
Gourg. ii.
172. Lab.
334. Chamb
ii. 413, 419..

The intelligence which the Emperor received at Smolensko from his two flanks, would alone have been sufficient to compel his retreat to the Niemen, even if ample means of subsistence had been found for the army. The secondary armies of Russia had everywhere resumed

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

57.

Disastrous
intelligence
from the
armies on
both flanks.
Important
operations
of Wittgen-
stein on the
Dwina.

the offensive: the gigantic plan of Alexander for the capture of the grand army was rapidly advancing to maturity: the flames of Moscow had set the whole empire on fire. Wittgenstein's army, having been raised by the junction of Count Steinheil with ten thousand regular troops from Finland, the militia of St Petersburg, and some additional reinforcements from the capital, to fifty thousand men, that general resumed the offensive. Having divided his army into two columns, at the head of thirty-six thousand men, he advanced on the right bank of the Dwina against Marshal St-Cyr, while Steinheil, with thirteen thousand, operated against his rear on the left bank of the river. Shut up in Polotsk, the French general had only thirty thousand men to oppose to these formidable masses. The Russian militia, incorporated with the regular army, soon acquired the discipline and hardihood of veteran soldiers, and emulated their valour in the very first actions in which they were engaged.¹

¹ Bout. ii.
254, 260.
Jom. iv.
182. Fain,
ii. 263, 264.

58.
The Rus-
sians under
Wittgen-
stein carry
Polotsk by
storm.
Oct. 18.

On the 18th October, being the very day on which Kutusoff attacked Murat at Winkowo, Wittgenstein advanced against Polotsk, where St-Cyr occupied an intrenched camp; and an obstinate battle began along the whole line of the intrenchments. General Diebitch, who commanded the advanced guard, supported by the Russian tirailleurs, composed for the most part of militia, carried the French redoubts in the centre; while Prince Jachwill drove them under cover of the cannon of the city on the right; but on the left, the French, after a furious engagement, maintained their ground. Night put an end to the battle, and the Russians withdrew from the intrenchments which had been the scene of so much carnage. On the following morning at ten o'clock, the cannon of Count Steinheil on the left of the river gave the joyful intelligence to the Russians that they were supported on that side; to the French, that their communications were in danger. St-Cyr immediately

made dispositions for a retreat, and the artillery was silently drawn across the bridges ; but towards night the Russians, who, during the whole day, had been establishing their batteries, perceiving the movement, opened a concentric fire from all sides upon the city. The wooden houses having been set on fire by the shells, the flames threw so bright a light around the intrenchments, that the troops fought at midnight as in full day. At two in the morning the Russians carried the ramparts, and drove the enemy with the bayonet through the burning streets. The French, nevertheless, disputed the ground so bravely, that they saved almost their whole artillery, and reached the opposite bank with the loss only of four thousand killed and wounded, and two thousand prisoners, having previously broken down the bridge over the Dwina.¹

CHAP.
LXXIII.
1812.

The Russians in these engagements had about three thousand killed and wounded ; and on the following day Count Steinheil, having been attacked by a superior force detached by St-Cyr, was defeated and compelled to recross the Dwina, leaving eighteen hundred prisoners in the hands of the enemy. There appears to have been a want of concert in the movements of the Russian generals on the opposite sides of the stream. Had they attacked vigorously at the same moment, there can be no doubt, not only that the check of Count Steinheil would have been avoided, but the greater part of the French army must have been made prisoners. It had been intended by Wittgenstein to turn the right of St-Cyr, and thus cut him off from his communications with Smolensko and the grand army. But the difficulty of throwing bridges over the river at Gorianny having rendered that design abortive, the French general retired towards Smoliantzy, where he formed a junction on the 31st October with Victor, who came to his support from Smolensko with twenty-five thousand men.² The pursuit of the Russians was retarded for several days by the

¹ Ségur, ii.
220, 223.
Bout. ii.
254, 274.
Jom. iv.
182. Fain,
ii, 263, 266.
Lab. 303.

59.
Check of
Steinheil,
and continued suc-
cesses of
Wittgen-
stein.

² Ségur, ii.
223, 225.
Bout. ii.
275, 280.
Chamb. iii.
1-10.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

difficulty of re-establishing the bridges ; but they overtook them near Smoliantzy, and made eight hundred prisoners from the rearguard.

60.
Indecisive
action at
Smoliantzy.

Nov. 7.

Wittgenstein immediately established himself, in conformity with the plan of the campaign, on the banks of the Oula, and detached a division to take possession of Witpepsk, which was captured with a slender garrison, but large and important magazines, on the 7th November. Napoleon, alarmed by the near approach of Wittgenstein's corps, ordered Victor and Oudinot, who had now resumed the command of St-Cyr's corps, to drive it back, without advancing too far from the line of the grand army. The Russians, perceiving the enemy's intention, took a strong position at Smoliantzy, and called in their detached columns to give battle. On the 14th the French columns began the attack, which continued with various success during the whole day ; but at length, after the village of Smoliantzy had been six times taken and retaken, the French marshals, disconcerted by the heavy fire of the Russian batteries, and desirous not to risk the retreat of the Emperor by a more serious contest, withdrew from the field. The loss of each party was about three thousand men ; but the success of the Russians was evinced by the retreat of their adversaries, and the re-establishment of their remaining position on the banks of the Oula.¹

¹ Bout. ii.
287, 294.
Jom. iv.
191. Ségur,
ii. 223, 227.
Chamb. iii.
1, 17. Fain,
ii. 291, 293.

61.
Operations
of Tchichagoff
on the
other flank.
Sept. 14.

Meanwhile Tchichagoff, having rapidly advanced from Bucharest, which he left on the 31st July, by Jassy, Chotsin, and Zaslav, to Ostrog, effected his junction, behind the Styr, with Tormasoff, on the 14th September. Schwartzenberg, whose whole force, including Saxons and Poles, did not exceed forty-three thousand, immediately commenced his retreat ; while the Russian generals, at the head of above sixty thousand men, resumed offensive operations. The Austrians retired from the banks of the Turia to those of the Bug, with the loss, during their retreat, of two thousand killed and wounded, and five

thousand prisoners. Tchichagoff having thus cleared the country of these enemies, and compelled them to fall back in the direction of Warsaw, changed the direction of his movements, and leaving to General Sacken, with a part of his army, the task of observing Schwartzberg and preventing him from returning to the theatre of war, moved himself, with the main body of his forces, in the direction of the Beresina. Sacken was reinforced by the corps of Count Essen, which raised his force to twenty-seven thousand men ; while Tchichagoff, with thirty-eight thousand men and one hundred and fifty-six pieces of cannon, moved in the direction of Minsk. He there expected to effect a junction with the little army of General Ertell, who, with twelve thousand men, had maintained his ground in the neighbourhood of Bobrinsk since the beginning of the campaign ; and thus bring a force of fifty thousand men to operate on the communications of the grand army.¹

The Austrians having begun to recross the Bug with a force which reinforcements had raised to forty-five thousand men, in order to act against Sacken, the Russian general advanced to attack them in detail before their whole force was across the river. By a rapid advance, he succeeded in drawing the whole attention of Schwartzberg upon himself ; and, when pressed by superior forces, took post in the vast forest of Bialswège. But the Austrian commander having manœuvred with great skill and vigour, contrived to interpose a column between him and Tchichagoff, and thereby compelled him to fall back to Bozest. The Russian general, by a happy mixture of boldness and prudence, succeeded, however, first, by an offensive movement, in attracting to himself the whole force of his adversary, nearly double his own ; and then, by a skilful retreat, in withdrawing his troops, without any serious loss, in such a direction as to preclude his opponents from throwing any obstacle in the way of the decisive measures which were commencing on the Beresina.²

CHAP.
LXXXIII.
1812.

¹ Bout. ii.
102, 112,
312. Jom.
iv. 183.
Chamb. ii.
399, 403.

62.
Operations
of Schwartz-
berg
against
Sacken.

² Bout. ii.
311, 314,
349. Fain,
ii. Chamb.
iii. 399,
400.

CHAP.
LXXXIII.

1812.

63.

Capture of
Minsk and
the bridge
of Borissow
by Tchichagoff.

Nov. 16.

During these operations, Tchichagoff advanced with great expedition in the direction of Minsk. That town, containing the immense magazines and depots which Napoleon, during the whole summer, had been collecting for his army, was garrisoned by six thousand men, chiefly new levies, under the Polish General Bronykowski. The Russians, after destroying several smaller detachments which they met on the road, came up with and totally defeated the garrison at Koidanow, with the loss of three thousand prisoners. The immediate consequence of this success was the capture of Minsk, on November 16, with its immense magazines, and above two thousand wounded men. By the loss of this important point, the French were deprived not only of their principal depot, but of their best line of retreat. Bronykowski fell back to the bridge of Borissow, which commanded the only remaining communication of the grand army. Dom-browsky, who was at the head of a Polish corps of eight thousand men in that quarter, instantly hastened to the defence of this important post; but notwithstanding all their efforts, the bridge, with its *tête-de-pont*, was forced on the 21st by the corps of Count Lambert, who captured eight cannon and two thousand five hundred prisoners, besides destroying two thousand of the enemy's best troops. This decisive blow gave the Russians the command of the only remaining bridge over the Beresina, and seemed to render the escape of Napoleon a matter of absolute impossibility. At the same time Count Cher-nicheff, who had been detached by Tchichagoff to open a communication with Wittgenstein, succeeded, after extraordinary exertions and by a long detour, in reaching the headquarters of that enterprising commander. In crossing the great road from Smolensko to Warsaw, he had the singular good fortune to fall in with and liberate General Winzingerode, recently taken in Moscow, who was moving as a prisoner towards the French dominions.¹

¹ Bout. ii. 331. Fain, ii. 326, 329. Chamb. ii. 403, 405.

In this way the gigantic plan formed by the Russians

for the destruction of Napoleon's army approached its accomplishment. The forces of Wittgenstein and Tchichagoff, drawn from the opposite extremities of Europe, had successfully reached their destined points ; the lines of the Oula and the Beresina were guarded by seventy thousand men ; Minsk with its vast magazines, Borissow with its fortified bridge, Witepsk with its accumulated stores, were in the hands of the Russians : while Napoleon, with the shattered remains of his army, was still engaged with the whole forces of Kutusoff in the neighbourhood of Smolensko. The plan so ably traced by the cabinet of St Petersburg had, nevertheless, not been fully carried into execution. Instead of seventy, they had calculated on one hundred and twenty thousand combatants being assembled in the rear of the grand army ; and the armies of the Russian commanders, though approaching, were not in such close proximity as to be able to support each other in case of danger. The principal causes of this disappointment were the non-arrival of General Ertell, who had failed to join Tchichagoff with his troops, and the disasters which had reduced to one-half the corps of Count Steinheil. Nevertheless, the force in his rear, such as it was, would have rendered the escape of any part of the French army altogether desperate to any other commander than Napoleon.¹

The French Emperor, perceiving from the exhausted state of the magazines, the loss of Polotsk, and the advance of Wittgenstein and Tchichagoff directly towards his line of communications, that a protracted stay at Smolensko was impossible, prepared for a continuance of his retreat. The remains of the cavalry, reduced from forty thousand, who crossed the Niemen, to five thousand one hundred, were formed into one body, and placed under the orders of Latour Maubourg ; the shattered battalions blended into separate corps ; and the Emperor, putting himself at the head of the Old Guard, set out from Smolensko on the 14th. His troops amounted, from the addition of

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

64.

Partial completion of the plan for surrounding Napoleon.

¹ Bout. ii.
349, 350.
Chamb. iii.
12, 26.
Fain, ii.
328, 329.

65.

Alarmed by these disasters, Napoleon resolves to retire from Smolensko to the Niemen.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Ségur, ii.
235, 237.
Bout, ii.
208, 237,
239. Clause-
witz, 98.
Chamb. ii.
1, 27, 31.

the detachments picked up on the road, and reserves which they had found at Smolensko, five thousand strong, to nearly seventy thousand men; but of this body not more than forty-two thousand were in such a state of organisation as to be capable of offensive operations. They had already lost three hundred and fifty pieces of cannon; but nearly two hundred and fifty were still dragged along, destined ere long to augment the long catalogue of the victors' trophies.¹

66.
Arrival of
Kutusoff at
Krasnoi.

Kutusoff, continuing his parallel march, had already arrived in the neighbourhood of Krasnoi with his whole army, excepting the Cossacks under Platoff; but it did not now exceed fifty thousand men. Thirty thousand soldiers had been left behind during the rapid movement from Malo-Jaroslawitz, from fatigue and the severity of the weather, which affected the Russian troops even *more* than those from the south of Europe. The Russian soldiers had the advantage of the French in the enthusiasm of success, in having marched over an unwasted country, in having preserved a greater number of their artillery-horses, and in not *ultimately* losing the men who fell behind. But the cold of winter was as severe upon them as upon the invaders, while their capacity to endure it was less, from the constitutions of their soldiers not being so strong as those of the enemy, who had been brought up in more genial latitudes. And the diminution of their ranks for present operations was fully as great as that of their adversaries. Thus the relative strength of the two parties was not materially different from what it had been when the retreat began; and although the French army was grievously disorganised, yet all history showed that such an army, from the effects of despair, is often capable of making surprising efforts if ably and resolutely led.²

² Bout. ii.
232. Larrey,
iv. 111, 112.

The French troops marched, as on the previous part of the retreat, in successive columns. The Emperor, with the Old and New Guard, came first; next that of the

Viceroy, then Davoust, while Ney still continued to bring up the rear. On the 14th the Old Guard reached Krasnoi. Kutusoff, having brought up the greater part of his army to the neighbourhood of the great road early on the morning of the 15th, opened a heavy fire of artillery on the French Guards; while Milaradowich crossed the great road, and drove back the heads of the advancing columns. In the night, however, Napoleon attacked the Russians with the best divisions of the Young Guard, and succeeded in clearing the route to Krasnoi; and on the following morning the Emperor himself passed the dangerous part of the road in the midst of the Old Guard. Kutusoff, afraid to encounter that formidable body, withdrew his troops from the road, and harassed their march only by a distant cannonade. The veterans closed their ranks round their monarch as they passed the Russian batteries, and played in the hottest of the fire the celebrated air—" *Où peut-on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille?*" "Say, rather," exclaimed the Emperor, "*Veillons au salut de l'Empire.*"^{1*}

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

67.

Order of the
French re-
treat from
Smolensko.
Nov. 14-15.

Nov. 16.

¹ Ségur, ii.
242, 244,
245. Bout.
ii. 208, 210.
Fain, ii.
202. Gourg.
ii. 202.

It was not, however, without anxious deliberation at the Russian headquarters that this resolution to let Napoleon in person pass without resistance was adopted. Many generals urged Kutusoff, in the most earnest manner, to place the bulk of his forces across the road from Krasnoi to Liady, and prolong his left as far as the Dnieper. These measures were entirely in his power, and, if carried into effect, the only line of retreat would have been barred to Napoleon, and he would have had no alternative but to cut his way through or surrender. So powerful were the reasons which they urged, and so evident the disorganisation of the French army, from the appearance and reports of the prisoners who were brought in, that it was determined in the first instance to do so,

68.

Kutusoff's
reasons for
avoiding an
action with
Napoleon in
person.

* "Where can one be better than in the bosom of his family?" "Let us watch over the safety of the Empire."—Two well-known and popular airs in France.

CHAP.
LXXXIII.

1812.

and orders to that effect had actually been issued, when a peasant, who was brought in from Krasnoi, reported that the troops in and around that town wore large hair bonnets. The recognition of the well-known plumes of the Imperial Guard immediately produced an impression on the cautious veteran, who had with difficulty been brought to go into vigorous measures, and he relapsed at once into his old habits at the presence of Napoleon and the Old Guard. "Would you have me," said he, "put in hazard what I am sure of obtaining without risk in a short time? All that array will melt away in a few days without my interference." The orders given were immediately countermanded, and Napoleon was allowed to pass through, with no other annoyance than a distant cannonade. Before we blame Kutusoff for this determination, we should recollect that the diminished amount of the French army was unknown to the Russian general. He had felt the weight of a hundred and thirty thousand of Napoleon's troops at Borodino, and he was ignorant that not more than forty thousand remained in a condition to force the passage. He knew that Wittgenstein and Tchichagoff were prepared to intercept the Emperor farther on at the Beresina; and he judged, perhaps wisely, that the best thing he could do was, at the least possible hazard to himself, to weaken him for the encounter.¹

¹ Claus. 214.
Chamb. i.
438, 439.

69.
Impression
the name of
Napoleon
still pro-
duced on
the minds
of men,

In truth, on this occasion, as during the whole remainder of the retreat, the French army owed their safety chiefly to the circumstance that the Russian generals were far from being aware of the miserable condition to which their antagonists were reduced; and took their measures to resist the grand army, when, in truth, it was only the skeleton of that awful array which was before them. By a more vigorous onset they might, in all probability, have effected its entire destruction. This illusion, so natural from the heroic deeds of the French army, was increased by the circumstance that, in several intercepted despatches from Berthier to the marshals of

the army, which fell into the hands of the Russians, he spoke of different corps of the armies as if they still existed in considerable strength, when in fact they were little better than shadows. The imagination could not conceive the extent of disaster which had befallen the French army : the remembrance of its deeds still affected the minds of men ; and Napoleon was still the mighty conqueror at the head of the grand army, when, in truth, he could not collect forty thousand men around his standards in a condition to face the enemy.¹

No sooner had the Guard passed, than Kutusoff made his dispositions to block up the line of retreat, and cut off the corps of the Viceroy. Milaradowich, with his corps, was placed astride upon the great road fronting Smolensko, while General Raeffskoi was established parallel to its line, to take the advancing columns in flank. Eugene, after passing a miserable night round the fires of his bivouac, was advancing slowly on foot along the road in the middle of his staff, when he was met by an officer of Milaradowich, who summoned him to surrender. The French general Guyon, the sole survivor of his brigade, repelled the insulting proposal. But immediately the heads of the column were arrested by a shower of cannon-shot ; the hills on the left of the road were seen bristling with armed men, and a fence of levelled bayonets closed the front. Far from being dismayed by so fearful a spectacle, the brave Eugene, worthy of the crown he wore, formed his troops into three divisions, and advanced with firmness to attack the Russian batteries. But the French squares in vain strove to cut their way through the hostile ranks : their battalions melted away under the fire of the grape-shot, while numerous squadrons poured down from the eminences on the left to destroy the scattered columns. Finding it impracticable to force his way along the great road, the Viceroy placed himself and the Royal Guard at the head of his best troops ;² and while the enemy were actively engaged on the left,

CHAP.
LXXIII.
1812.

¹ Chamb. iii.
91. Claus.
214, 215.

70.
Successful
attack on
Eugene's
corps.
Nov. 16.

Atlas,
Plate 77.

² Ségur, ii.
250, 255.
Lab. 347,
352. Bout.
ii. 212, 214.
Fain, ii.
304, 305.
Chamb. iii.
441, 444.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

defiled across the fields during the obscurity of the evening, by his right, between the highroad and the Dnieper, and joined the Emperor at Krasnoi. In this affair he lost twenty-two hundred prisoners, a still greater number killed, one eagle, and eighteen pieces of cannon ; but he saved the honour of his corps by his intrepidity and skill.

71.
Arrangements for cutting off Davoust as he passed. Napoleon's resolution to assist him. Nov. 17.

Encouraged by this success, Kutusoff resolved, on the 17th, to bring his whole force to bear upon the corps of Davoust which had still to pass. For this purpose he divided his army into three columns ; the first, under the orders of General Tormasoff, who had been called to the main army since the death of Bagrathion, was destined to advance towards the great road beyond Krasnoi in the direction of Orcha, so as to threaten the communications of Napoleon, and prevent him from sending succour to his distressed lieutenant. The second, commanded by Prince Gallitzin, received orders to move upon Krasnoi, and attack the enemy in front ; while the third, under the orders of Milaradowich, was commanded to allow the corps of Davoust to defile along the road towards Krasnoi, till the whole body was past, and then to fall upon his rear. In this manner, he hoped that the corps of Davoust, pressed together, and attacked in front and on both flanks at the same time, would be thrown into disorder and destroyed. Napoleon, feeling the necessity of making an effort to disengage that marshal from his perilous situation, prolonged his stay on the 17th at Krasnoi, and accepted the combat. Before daylight the division of Roguet of the Guard surprised and defeated a Russian detachment commanded by Ojarowski ; a success of great importance, by the check which it gave to the Russian troops, and the circumspection which it produced in their commander. Napoleon drew up his troops in two lines fronting the Russian centre, with their right resting on the town of Krasnoi, and their left on the ravine of the Lossmina.¹ At daybreak he set out from Krasnoi on foot, in the direction of Smolensko, to

¹ Ségur, ii. 256, 262.
Bout. ii. 215, 217.
Gourg. ii. 97. Chamb. ii. 491.

lend his aid to Davoust, who was coming up. On seizing his sword, he exclaimed—"I have long enough acted the Emperor: now is the moment to resume the general."

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

The action commenced by Prince Gallitzin, with the Russian centre, attacking General Roguet and the Young Guard. After an obstinate conflict, in the course of which a square of the Imperial Guard was broken and destroyed by the Russian cuirassiers, the Russians established themselves on the banks of the Lossmina, near the centre of the French position. At the same time, the corps of Davoust, which had been suffered to pass by Milaradowich, appeared in sight, slowly moving on in the midst of a cloud of Cossacks, which enveloped its ranks. The position of Napoleon was now in the highest degree critical. In front, on the right and left, the horizon was flaming with the enemy's fire; Krasnoi was speedily filled by a crowd of fugitives from the centre and Davoust's corps, which could no longer maintain their ground against Prince Gallitzin and the increasing force of Milaradowich, which pressed on from the south and east. At this dreadful moment, if the corps of Tormasoff had appeared on the road to the right, between Krasnoi and Liady, there seems no doubt that the whole French army would either have been compelled to surrender, or been driven back upon the Dnieper, and lost in the marshes and forests which border that desolate stream. But Kutusoff, having discovered that the Emperor with his Guards was in Krasnoi, delayed the march of his left wing till eleven o'clock, so as to give that formidable body and Mortier time to defile towards Liady, before Tormasoff crossed the road—overawed, it would appear, by the thoughts of driving to desperation so great a conqueror, or desirous of securing, without loss to himself, the destruction of the corps of Davoust. The consequence was, that Napoleon, with the half of his Guards who had survived the battle, got through in safety to Liady, while Prince Gallitzin carried by assault the

72.
Battle of
Krasnoi.
Nov. 17.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Bout. ii.
218, 223,
224. Ségur,
ii. 264, 275.
Fain, ii.
306, 307.
Chamb. ii.
445, 449.

village of Krasnoi; and the corps of Davoust, severely pressed in rear by the troops of Milaradowich, and cut in two by the advanced guard of Tormasoff, which at length arrived at its ground, was almost totally destroyed. In this battle, the Russians took above six thousand prisoners, forty-five pieces of cannon, two standards, and an immense quantity of baggage, among which were the baton of Marshal Davoust, and part of the archives of Napoleon.¹

73.
Imminent
danger and
heroic con-
duct of Ney.

Meanwhile the corps of Marshal Ney, which brought up the rear, left Smolensko on the morning of the 17th, after blowing up part of the ramparts. On their route, they speedily saw traces of the ruin of the grand army: cannon, caissons, dead horses, wounded men, arrested their progress at every step, amidst a tremendous cold and an unusual accumulation of snow. Kutusoff, informed of the situation of this corps by the papers of the Emperor found at Krasnoi, prepared for his reception. The army was established in two columns on the great road, facing both ways, in order at once to prevent any attempt at a rescue by the French troops who had got on towards Liady, and intercept the concluding column of the army; while a body of cavalry was detached to prevent him defiling by the right of the great road. The French columns, ignorant of their danger, approached on the 18th, under cover of a thick fog, the banks of the Lossmina, strewed with the dead bodies of their comrades, when they were suddenly assailed by repeated discharges of grape-shot from forty pieces of cannon; while the whole heights on their front and flank appeared crested by dense black columns of infantry and artillery, ranged in order of battle. To a proposal for a capitulation, the intrepid Ney replied, "A marshal of France never surrenders!" and instantly forming his columns of attack, advanced with the utmost heroism against the Russian batteries.² His soldiers, worthy of their immortal commander, closed their ranks, and marched with hopeless

² Bout. ii.
225, 229.
Ségur, ii.
288, 292,
300. Fain,
ii. 310, 312.
Chamb. ii.
462, 473.

devotion against the iron bands of their adversaries ; but after a fruitless action and the loss of half their numbers, they were thrown into disorder, and driven back to a considerable distance from the field of battle, with the loss of three thousand five hundred prisoners, and above two thousand killed.

CHAP.
LXXIII.
1812.

The marshal, perceiving that the enemy's position could not be forced in front, and that they were extending to the north of the great road, to prevent him from escaping as Prince Eugene had done, formed a body of four thousand out of the most efficient of his troops, and with these retired for an hour on the road to Smolensko, when he suddenly turned to the north, and moved towards the Dnieper. This able manœuvre was suggested to him by Colonel Pelet, who afterwards was so distinguished at Waterloo.* The severity of the cold had frozen part of the course of that river : at the village of Syrokorenje, his advanced posts fell in with a peasant who conducted them to a point where the passage was practicable ; and he succeeded, during the night, in transporting three thousand men, without horses or artillery, over the fragile ice, to the opposite shore. He even waited three hours on the bank before venturing across the river, to give time for his stragglers to join his little detachment ; and during this anxious period, the heroic marshal, wrapped in his cloak, slept quietly on the margin of the stream. The remainder of his corps, amounting to eight thousand five hundred, with twenty-seven pieces of cannon, and the whole baggage belonging to it, fell into the hands of the Russians. In the morning of the 19th, a column of two thousand five hundred men was surrounded by the Russian cavalry in the neighbourhood of Winnyia-Louki, and made prisoners ;¹ and the remnant of Marshal Ney's corps was assailed by the Cossacks, who had come from Smolensko along the north bank of the river, and com-

74.
Glorious retreat of Ney.

¹ Fain, ii.
311, 312.
Chamb. ii.
462, 473.
Ségur, ii.
292, 300.
Bout. ii.
225, 226.

* BIGNON, xi. 149 : See *infra*, Chap. xciv. § 37.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

75.

Heroic conduct of Ney during his retreat.

pelled to abandon three hundred prisoners and ten pieces of cannon.

Ney was severely harassed by Platoff in his retreat, after crossing the Dnieper. For above twenty leagues he marched in the midst of six thousand of these Scythians, who hovered incessantly round his wearied columns. On one occasion the Cossacks got the start of his advanced troops; and the sudden apparition of flashes of artillery in the midst of the darkness of the forest, announced that they were surrounded by their enemies. The bravest fell back in dismay, and gave themselves up for lost; but the marshal, with admirable presence of mind, ordered the charge to be beat, and exclaimed, "Comrades, now is the moment; forward! they are ours!" At these words, the surprised soldiers, imagining that the enemy were cut off, resumed their courage, and the Cossacks, dreading an overthrow, fled in confusion. At length, after undergoing innumerable hardships, the heroic commander brought the remnant of his corps, hardly amounting to fifteen hundred armed men, to the neighbourhood of Orcha; and the Emperor, who heard with the utmost joy of their approach, sent the Viceroy's corps to their assistance, which enabled them to rejoin in safety the other corps of the army. When they arrived, he exclaimed, "I have three hundred millions in my coffers in the Tuileries: I would willingly have given them to save Marshal Ney!"

¹ Gourg. ii.
116. Ségur,
ii. 308, 310.
Bout. ii.
235. Fain,
ii. 324, 325.

76.

General results of the battles of Krasnoi.

The result of the actions on the 16th, 17th, and 18th, besides one hundred and twelve pieces of cannon abandoned near Smolensko, was the capture of twenty-six thousand prisoners, three hundred officers, and one hundred and sixteen pieces of cannon taken on the field, and ten thousand killed or drowned; with the loss to the Russians of only two thousand men. The grand army was, after they were over, reduced to ten thousand combatants, and twice that number of stragglers. The history of the Revolutionary wars can afford no parallel to such a success achieved at so small a sacrifice to the

victorious party. Napoleon himself bore testimony to the ability with which the manœuvres on his flank had been conducted.¹ The skill of the Russian movements is the more to be admired, because, with a force inferior upon the whole to their antagonists, they were always superior at the point of attack. Napoleon left Smolensko with seventy thousand men, of whom above one-half were still efficient: Kutusoff arrived at Krasnoi with only fifty thousand, nearly as much debilitated by suffering as their opponents. It must, however, be admitted, that the caution of the Russian commander, however praiseworthy on former occasions, was misplaced on the 17th at Krasnoi: the Russians there, though not superior in number to their antagonists, were supported by all the excitement of victory, while successive disasters had sunk the spirit of the French; and the chance of capturing Napoleon, or even his principal generals, was worth purchasing even at the hazard of a defeat to a corps of the army.^{2*}

Although the Emperor and part of the army had escaped this imminent danger at Krasnoi, yet it was a painful sight for his officers to behold the straits to which he was reduced, and the utter disorganisation which pervaded every part of the army. The horses having all perished, or been reserved by the Emperor's orders for the wounded, Napoleon himself marched on foot, with a birch staff in his hand, to avoid falling on the icy roads, surrounded by a body of officers who still preserved some sort of regularity of appearance. He was dressed in a Polish cloak with rich fur; Berthier was always by his side, wrapped in a similar costume: part of the staff followed them on foot, the remainder on horseback, at a little distance. The horse-artillery of the Guard, reduced to twelve pieces, with the gunners, all dismounted, closed

CHAP.
LXXXIII.

1812.

¹ Ségur, ii.
278.

² Bout. ii.
232, Gourg.
ii. 215.
Chamb. ii.
448, 449.
Fain, ii.
308, 313.
Claus. 99.

77.
Horrible
confusion
which
reigned in
the French
army.

* "The Russian army was as much weakened by stragglers, sick, and the cold, as the French; but it had the great advantage in the end of not losing those left behind."—FAIN, ii. 313.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

the procession ; on either side some battalions of the Old Guard, still marching in regular array, and with an undaunted air, averted flank attacks. But it was with extreme difficulty that they could force their way through the crowd of straggling soldiers, baggage-waggons, chariots, cannon, and camp followers, who, pell-mell and in utter confusion, crowded the roads in the most frightful disorder. Nothing but the devotion of the officers who surrounded him, preserved any sort of order in this disorganised multitude. But their efforts were incessant to watch over the safety of the Emperor, and they succeeded in bringing him safely through the appalling confusion with which he was surrounded.¹

¹ Dumas,
Souv. iii.
467. Larrey,
iv. 94.
Chamb. ii.
447, 448.

78.
Prodigious
losses of the
French
army, and
cessation of
the Russian
pursuit.

The whole French troops at length assembled near Orcha ; but they exhibited a miserable skeleton of the grand army. Out of forty-three thousand of the Guard who had crossed the Niemen five months before, there remained only six thousand ; but they were in tolerable condition, and had preserved part of their artillery. Davoust had only saved four thousand out of seventy thousand ; Eugene, eighteen hundred out of forty-two thousand ; Ney, fifteen hundred out of forty thousand. Even with the aid of some reserves which joined them on the road at this time, the army could barely muster twelve thousand combatants. The marshals vainly attempted to re-establish order, and formed a party of gendarmes to arrest the stragglers, and bring them back to their standards : the punishment of death had lost its terrors to men who expected only a few hours of life. The severity of the weather, however, abated at Orcha. To the intense frost of the preceding fortnight succeeded a thaw, which rendered the bivouacs at night less intolerable ; magazines in abundance were found in the town, and a park of artillery supplied the losses of the corps in that essential particular. The garrison of the town and the Polish cavalry in the neighbourhood were joined to the army. Kutusoff, finding that, during the delay

occasioned by the action with Marshal Ney's corps, the remains of the French army had gained the start of him by several marches, resolved to relinquish the pursuit to his advanced guard, and give the main body that repose of which after such astonishing efforts it stood so much in need. For this purpose he moved his headquarters, by easy marches, to Kopys on the Dnieper, leaving to Wittgenstein and Tchichagoff the task of completing the destruction of the French army.¹

The advanced guard of Tchichagoff, advancing beyond the bridge of Borissow, in order to approach Wittgenstein's corps, was met on the 23d by the vanguard of Oudinot, and totally defeated, with the loss of above one thousand men. The Russians, in consequence, repassed the river in the utmost confusion ; but they had the presence of mind to destroy the important bridge at that place in their flight. This circumstance still exposed Napoleon to the difficulty of throwing over a bridge and crossing the river in the face of the enemy's army ; a difficulty which was not diminished by the intelligence, that on the same day Wittgenstein had fallen on Oudinot's rearguard under Victor, and made fifteen hundred prisoners. By this disaster that corps was thrown back upon the centre of the army, slowly dragging on their weary way under Napoleon in person. They met suddenly in the middle of a pine forest, and Victor's men then beheld, for the first time, the ghastly remains of that once splendid array traversing the wood more like a troop of captives than a body of armed men. The squalid looks of the soldiers ; the silent tread and sunk visages of the men ; their long beards and smoke-besmeared countenances ; the vast number of officers and generals marching without troops, promiscuously with the common men ; the extraordinary dresses of the men, composed of women's pelisses, old carpets, or torn cloaks, threw the troops of Victor, who had been kept ignorant of the disasters of the grand army, into consternation ;² and disorder, the most con-

CHAP.
LXXXIII.
1812.

¹ Bout. ii.
235. Gourg.
ii. 112.
Ségur, ii.
273, 277.
Chamb. ii.
445. Claus.
98, 99.

79.
Breaking
down of the
bridge of
Borissow,
and junction
of Napoleon
and Victor.
Nov. 23.

² Ségur, ii.
332, 333.
Bout. ii.
356, 357.
Chamb. iii.
12, 13.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

80.

Forces
which Na-
poleon now
collected,
and those
which Tchi-
chagoff had
to oppose
him.

tagious of all maladies, began rapidly to spread through their ranks.

Oudinot's corps, retiring before Wittgenstein, soon after joined Napoleon; the remains of Dombrowski's division, and some detached bodies of cavalry, who had been stationed there to keep up the communications, were also drawn to headquarters: and in this way the French army was again raised to thirty thousand combatants. They had now, by the junction of Victor's and Oudinot's trains of artillery, two hundred and fifty guns with them, which, by drafting off the horses from the troops of these marshals, which had suffered comparatively little, were all in a state of tolerable efficiency. The numbers of the array which now followed the standards of Napoleon were much more considerable than its intrinsic power; for it was followed by a disorderly rabble of forty thousand stragglers, hardly distinguishable in appearance from the efficient combatants, and which made the army appear of double its real strength. Nearly ten thousand of these might be expected, on a crisis, still to range themselves round the standards of the Emperor; so that, after making every allowance for the disorganisation of a part of this force, Napoleon had still at his disposal a body of forty thousand combatants, perfectly armed, and in a condition to fight; they were supported by a powerful train of artillery, and all were penetrated by the conviction that their only chance of safety lay in their own courage and resolution. To oppose this still formidable force, Tchichagoff could only reckon on thirty-three thousand men, of which one-third was cavalry, nearly unserviceable on the marshy shores and wooded banks of the Beresina; and his artillery did not exceed one hundred and fifty pieces. He had no chance, therefore, of opposing the passage of the river by main force; but the real danger of Napoleon consisted in this, that he might fall with superior numbers upon the French advanced guard¹ before the main body could come across

¹ Compare
Bout. ii.
355, 362.
Gourg. ii.
128, 143,
158. Jom.
iv. 196.
Chamb. iii.
49, 50.
Fain, ii.
397. Tchi-
chagoff, 44,
47. Claus.
99, 208.

to their assistance, or, by destroying the bridge over the marshes on the road to Zembin, render their farther progress impracticable even after passing the stream, or delay it, till the approach of Wittgenstein endangered the whole army.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

Napoleon's first intention was to have joined his troops to those of Victor and Oudinot, and, with their united force, fallen upon Wittgenstein, and forced his way across the Oula, on the direct line to Wilna. But the excessive difficulty of the roads in that direction, leading through forests and morasses, which offered no resources for the army, and the experienced strength of the Russian position of Smoliantzy, having compelled him to abandon that design, he moved direct upon the Beresina. On the road he received the disastrous intelligence, first, of the capture of Minsk, and then of the storming of the *tête-de-pont* of Borissow, by Tchichagoff's army. His situation now appeared altogether desperate. The only passage over the river was in the enemy's hands, while the sudden thaw had broken up its wintry covering, and filled the stream with fragments of floating ice, which rendered it apparently impossible to re-establish a communication with the opposite shore. In front was Tchichagoff, guarding the stream with thirty thousand men; on the right, Wittgenstein, with the like force, who had placed his troops in an impregnable position; on the left, Kutusoff with the main Russian army. In these critical circumstances the Emperor displayed his usual genius and firmness of mind. Far from despairing of his fortunes, he resolved to accumulate his force, and overwhelm the army of Moldavia, which obstructed the direct line of his return to Europe. For this purpose he united in one solid mass the remains of his own army, the corps of Victor, Oudinot, and Dombrowski, and all the detachments which he could collect in the neighbourhood, and, placing the corps of Oudinot in front and that of Victor in the rear, set out on his perilous march.¹

81.
Napoleon's
hazardous
situation,
and admir-
able plan
for forcing
his way
through.

¹ Tchicha-
goff, 44, 46.
Claus. 99,
100.
Chamb. iii.
49, 50.
Fain, ii.
39, 40.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

82.

Napoleon's
measure to
deceive the
enemy as to
his real
point of
passage.

Atlas,
Plate 78.

Nov. 24.

Nov. 25.

¹ Gourg. ii.
142. Jom.
iv. 197.
Bout. ii.
366.

83.
Singular
skill and
good fortune
by which
the passage
was effected.
Nov. 26.

To conceal his real intention, Napoleon made demonstrations towards the Lower Beresina, as if his design was to cross there, and unite his forces to those of Schwartzenberg. He even went so far as to make considerable preparations for a bridge nearly opposite Brill in that quarter. Meanwhile, the main body of his troops were collected on the heights of Borissow ; and, finding that his measures had attracted the whole attention of the enemy to the lower part of the river, he began, under cover of a battery of forty pieces of cannon, to throw two bridges, on the night of the 25th, over the stream, nearly opposite to Studienka. A severe frost, which set in on the 24th, facilitated the approach of the artillery and caissons to the river, over the marshy meadows which lined its sides : but this fortunate circumstance redoubled the difficulty of forming the bridges, by reason of the floating ice which was brought down by its waves. But nothing could arrest the French engineers. With heroic devotion, the corps of sappers threw themselves into the river amidst the moving masses of ice, with the water up to their shoulders ; while the cavalry of General Corbineau swam across the stream to drive back the Russian detachments which were beginning to collect on the opposite shore. The enemy were defeated ; and the bridge for infantry being at length completed by the incredible exertions of General Eblé and the French engineers, a brigade of infantry was soon transported in safety to the opposite shore.¹

By a singular piece of fortune, General Tchaplitz, who commanded the Russian troops on the western side of the river, at the very point where the passage was attempted, had been recalled by Tchichagoff, on that very night, to the Lower Beresina, to resist the attack which was anticipated in that quarter. In the morning of the 26th, the French, who had passed a sleepless night, watching the Russian forces, beheld with astonishment their bivouacs deserted, and their batteries in retreat, at the very time

that the bridge was beginning to acquire consistency. Tchaplitz, who was soon informed of the passage as he was moving away from it, made all haste to return ; but on reaching the spot he had so recently quitted, he found the advanced guard so firmly established, that it was impossible to dislodge them from their position. Another bridge was speedily completed for the passage of the carriages and artillery. Fifty pieces of cannon, besides the artillery of the whole corps, defiled in a short time to the western bank ; the whole of Oudinot's corps was transported across ; and the Russians having been driven back to the thickets, at a distance from the river, Napoleon found himself master of the important defiles that lead to Zembin, and the passage for his army secured.¹

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Jom. iv.
197, 198.
Bout. ii.
366, 367,
368. Gourg.
ii. 142.
Fain, ii.
375, 376.
Chamb. iii.
47, 49.

During these critical operations, Tchichagoff, with the main body of his forces, lay inactive at Chabachwiezi, obstinately adhering to his opinion that the serious attempt was to be made on the lower part of the river. He even adhered to this opinion *after he heard* of the passage having commenced at Studienka, conceiving that that operation was only a feint to withdraw his attention from the real intentions of the Emperor. But being at length convinced, by repeated advices from Tchaplitz, that the passage was seriously going forward at that point, he made all haste to march his troops in that direction ; while Wittgenstein, having received intelligence that the French were escaping over the river, attempted to march straight to Studienka, in order to destroy the rearguard on the left bank. But the state of the roads rendering that project impracticable, he was compelled to move to Staroi-Borissow. In this way he hoped either to cut off Victor, if he had not yet passed that place, or to follow him up in the direction of Studienka, if he had anticipated his movement.²

84.
Tchichagoff's measures on hearing of the passage.

Nov. 27.

² Bout. ii.
363, 371.
Jom. iv.
197, 198.
Fain, ii.
380, 382.
Chamb. iii.
52, 53.

The corps of Victor was extended along the left bank of the Beresina, as far as Borissow, which was occupied by General Partonneaux with a strong division. During

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

85.

Capture of
Parton-
neaux's
division by
Wittgen-
stein.
Nov. 27.

the whole of the 27th the passage of the army continued, while Victor's corps gradually drew nearer to the bridge ; but the division of Partonneaux, which formed his rear-guard, was commanded by Napoleon not to leave Borissow and move upon Staroi-Borissow till six in the evening. The consequence was, that before he could reach the latter town, Wittgenstein's army was firmly established across the great road, with his front facing the line by which alone the French could approach. Partonneaux, finding his progress interrupted by so formidable a force, attempted to cut his way through ; but his troops being defeated with great loss in their attempt, and finding their retreat to Borissow cut off by Platoff, who had come up with his Cossacks, he was compelled to capitulate with seven thousand men, including eight hundred cavalry in the best condition. He himself endeavoured, with four hundred men, to elude his pursuers during the obscurity of the night ; but after wandering some hours in the dark through the snowy desert, and finding every outlet blockaded by the enemy's fires, he was obliged to lay down his arms. On the same day General Yermoloff, with the advanced guard of Kutusoff's army, arrived at Borissow, and a bridge of pontoons having been established by Tchichagoff, his corps was instantly passed over to reinforce the army of Moldavia on the right bank ; and the Russian generals having met from Moscow, Finland, and Bucharest, at Borissow, on the night of the 27th, concerted measures for a general attack on the French army on both sides of the river for the following day. Tchichagoff, supported by Yermoloff, was to assail Oudinot and the French main body on the right bank, while Wittgenstein pressed upon Victor, and threw back his corps upon the bridge of Studienka.¹

¹ Segur, ii.
354, 357.
Bout, ii.
371, 374.
Fain, ii.
405, 407.
Chamb. iii.
60, 61.

Tchaplitz began the action on the morning of the 28th by a spirited attack on the corps of Marshal Oudinot ; but the French vanguard having been successively rein-

forced by the remains of Ney's corps, the legion of the Vistula, and the Imperial Guard, the Russians, after an obstinate conflict, were compelled to give way, with the loss of twelve hundred prisoners. The French cuirassiers charged with so much impetuosity, that the day would have been irretrievably lost, if Tchaplitz had not bravely thrown himself upon the victorious squadron at the head of the Russian hussars ; and Tchichagoff having at length brought up the main body of his forces, the battle was restored. But it was too late for decisive success. The French had gained the defile vital to their safety : the road to Zembin was secured, traversing for some hundred yards defiles through the marshes, where the narrow chaussée was laid on wood, which might have been burned, and the retreat of the French entirely stopped. During the action, the Guard and the corps of Davoust defiled in that direction. The battle continued in the wood between Brill and Stakhov with inconceivable fury till midnight ; the French fighting with the courage of despair, the Russians with the ardent desire to complete the destruction of their enemies. The loss was nearly equal on both sides ; that of Napoleon's troops amounted to nearly five thousand in killed and wounded.¹

While this was going forward on the right bank, Wittgenstein commenced a vigorous attack on the corps of Victor, now severely weakened by the loss of Partonneaux's division. After a bloody struggle, General Diebitch established a battery of twelve pieces so far in advance as to command the bridge, and the confused crowd of soldiers, chariots, and baggage-waggons, which was assembled in its vicinity ; and soon the balls from his guns began to fall among them. A dreadful tumult instantly commenced, and the whole crowd rushed towards the bridges, crushing each other in their flight, and blockading the passage in their efforts to get over. As the Russian corps successively gained ground, their batteries formed a vast semicircle, which played incessantly on the bridges

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

86.

The French
force their
way through
Tchichagoff's corps.
Nov. 28.

¹ Bout. ii.
378. Jom.
iv. 201.
Tchichagoff, 37.
Pain, ii.
395, 400.

87.

Furious attack of Wittgenstein on the troops on the left bank.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

till night, and augmented to desperation the terror of the multitudes who were struggling at their entrance. The Russian guns, as darkness began, presented an immense line of light, from which a terrible storm of round-shot and canister was sent forth with extraordinary rapidity. Despair now seized upon the host still on the eastern shore. In the midst of the confusion, the artillery-bridge broke, and the crowd who were upon it, pushed forward by those behind, were precipitated into the water, and perished miserably. Infantry, cavalry, and artillery, now rushed promiscuously to the other bridge, which was speedily choked up: through the frantic crowd, the caissons and cannon were urged forward with un pitying fury, ploughing their way, like the car of Juggernaut, through the dead and the dying, while the weaker were everywhere pushed into the stream; and thousands perished amidst the masses of ice which were floating on its waves.¹

¹ Ségur, ii.
367, 368.
Lab. 393.
Bout. ii.
379, 380.
Chamb. iii.
65, 66.
Fain, ii.
400.

88.
Frightful
scene when
the bridges
broke, and
generous
devotion
shown by
many at
this awful
passage.

In these moments of hopeless agony, all the varieties of character were exposed naked to view. Selfishness there exhibited its baseness, and cowardice its meanness; while heroism seemed clothed with supernatural power, and generosity cast a lustre over the character of humanity. Soldiers seized infants from their expiring mothers, and vowed to adopt them as their own: officers harnessed themselves to the sledges, to extricate their wounded comrades; privates threw themselves on the snow beside their dying officers, and exposed themselves to captivity or death to solace their last moments. Women were seen lifting their children above their heads in the water, raising them as they sank, and even holding them aloft for some moments after they themselves were buried in the waves. An infant abandoned by its mother near the gate of Smolensko, and adopted by the soldiers, was saved by their care from the horrors of the Beresina; it was again seen at Wilna, again on the bridge of Kowno, and it finally escaped all the horrors of the retreat. In the midst of this ter-

rific scene the rearguard of Marshal Victor, which had nobly sustained during the whole day the arduous duty of protecting the passage, arrived at the entrance of the bridge. His troops, with stern severity, opened a passage for themselves through the helpless crowd, and in vain endeavoured to persuade them to pass over to the opposite shore. Despair and misery had rendered them incapable of the exertion. At length, as morning dawned and the Russian troops approached, the rearguard were drawn across the bridge, which was set on fire. A frightful cry now rose from the multitude on the opposite bank, who awakened too late to the horrors of their situation. Numbers rushed over the burning bridge, and to avoid the flames plunged into the waves; while thousands wandered in hopeless misery along the shore, and beheld their last hopes expire with the receding columns of their countrymen. When the ice dissolved in spring, the magnitude of the disaster became manifest; twelve thousand dead bodies were found on the shores of the river.¹

CHAP.
LXXIII.
1812.

¹ Ségur, ii.
368, 373,
389. Bout.
ii. 383, 386.
Jom. iv.
203. Fain,
ii. 408, 409.
Chamb. iii.
71. Lab.
393, 395.

Such was the dreadful passage of the Beresina—glorious to the French arms, yet how fatal! The talent of the Emperor, the firmness of the soldiers, were never more strongly exemplified; but it completed the ruin of the grand army. Twenty-five pieces of cannon, sixteen thousand prisoners, and above twelve thousand dead, were the price at which the passage was purchased. The corps of Victor and Oudinot were reduced to the deplorable state of the troops who had come from Moscow; the army no longer preserved the appearance of military order, but a confused mass of forty-five thousand men marched in detached groups along the road to Wilna. The Emperor's moral courage and transcendent genius had never been more signally displayed: he had extricated himself with glory from a situation all but desperate. Chance favoured him in presenting a place for the passage so favourable as Studienka, and still more in

89.
Results of
this dread-
ful passage.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Claus.
211, 212.

90.
Dreadful
disorders
which now
ensued in
the retreat.

the removal of Tchaplitz from the opposite bank at the decisive moment ; but it was his eagle eye which seized the advantage, and his iron mind which, in such awful circumstances, disdained all thoughts of a compromise. Colossal fame preceded him, and prevented every adversary from obstructing his path. "You see," said Napoleon, when the passage was effected, "how one can pass under the beard of the enemy."¹

To complete the disaster, the frost, which for some days had been comparatively mild, set in on the 30th with increased severity. The general disorder now reached its height ; the horses of Victor and Oudinot's corps, and all those which had been collected on the retreat, shared the fate of those which had accompanied the grand army. The artillery was gradually abandoned ; the cavalry melted away ; and Marshal Ney with difficulty could collect three thousand men on foot to form the rearguard, and protect the helpless multitude from the attacks of Platoff and his indefatigable Cossacks. For some days Victor shared with him the post of danger ; and by their incessant exertions successive rearguards were formed, which rapidly disappeared under the severity of the weather or the attacks of the enemy. Tchaplitz and Platoff continued to press the retiring crowd ; and on the 4th December captured twenty-four cannon and two thousand five hundred prisoners. In the midst of the general ruin, a guard, called the "Sacred Squadron," was formed of officers, to surround and protect the Emperor. The gentlemen who composed it discharged with heroic fidelity the duty assigned to them, and executed without murmuring all the duties of common soldiers ; but the severity of the cold soon destroyed their horses, and the Emperor, in the midst of his faithful followers, was obliged to march on foot through the snow.² * At night, the bivouac was formed in the middle

² Ségur, ii.
375, 379,
389. Jom.
iv. 188.
29th Bull.
Bout. ii.
391. Lab.
398. Gourg.
ii. 132.

* Alexander, in similar circumstances, had done the same before him.
"Rex castigare territos supersedit : cæterum ipse equo desiliit, pedesque per

of the still unbroken squares of the Old Guard. These brave men sat round the watch-fires on their havresacks, with their elbows on their knees, their heads resting on their hands, and seated close together; striving by this posture to repress the pangs of hunger, and gather additional warmth by resting on each other.

CHAP.
LXXIII.
1812.

On the 5th, Napoleon arrived at Smorgoni. He there collected his marshals around him, dictated the famous 29th bulletin,* which fully developed the horrors of the retreat, and explained his reasons for immediately returning to Paris. "I quit you," said he, "but it is to go to seek three hundred thousand men. We must make preparations for a second campaign, since, for the first time, the first has not produced peace. You know to what our disasters have been owing; the Russians have had little to do with them. Peace would have been concluded at Wilna or Smolensko, but for the extraordinary blunders of the King of Westphalia and the Duke of Abrantes. Bernadotte is dreaming of making himself Emperor in my place. The Russian empire would have fallen with Moscow; but the English torches turned it into a heap of ashes. The cold has done the rest: the Russians may say, as the Athenians did of themselves under Themistocles, 'We were undone if we had not been ruined.' Nevertheless, the campaign of Russia will always be considered as the most glorious, the most difficult, and the most honourable which modern history has recorded." With these words he bade them farewell, leaving the command of the army to Murat, and set out, accompanied only by Generals Caulaincourt, Duroc, and Mouton: the former was in the calèche with the Emperor, the two latter in a sledge behind. On the seat in front of Napoleon's carriage were the Mameluke Rustan and Captain Wasowitz of the Polish lancers.¹ These

91.
Napoleon
leaves the
army for
Paris.

¹ Fain, ii.
423, 424.
Chamb. iii.
106. Ségur,
ii. 393, 394.
Gourg. ii.
176.

nivem et concretam glaciem ingredi cœpit. Erubuerunt non sequi, primum amici, deinde copiarum duces, ad ultimum milites. Primusque rex, dolabrâ glaciem perfringens, iter sibi fecit."—QUINTUS CURTIUS, v. § 6.

* See Appendix, A, Chap. LXXIII.

CHAP.
LXXXIII.

1812.

92.

Increased
severity of
the cold,
and dreadful
sufferings of
the troops.

were his sole attendants: and the carriages were followed only by a few Neapolitan horsemen.*

The departure of the Emperor, though a matter of congratulation to the troops, completed the disorganisation of the army. The cold increased in intensity as they approached Wilna, and at length reached twenty-six and thirty degrees below zero of Reaumur, corresponding to twenty-seven and thirty-six below zero of Fahrenheit. The officers ceased to obey their generals; the generals disregarded the marshals; and the marshals contested the authority of Murat.† Such was the severity of the cold, and the universal suffering in consequence, that no pen can adequately describe it. The hand dropped off which held the musket, the tears froze on the attenuated cheek. In such extreme suffering no orders could be obeyed, no military operations thought of; subordination, in almost all the regiments, entirely ceased. The private soldiers, relieved of the duty of preserving the Emperor, forgot everything but the instinct of self-preservation. The colonels hid the eagles in their havresacks, or buried them in the ground; the officers, who had hitherto marched round that sacred standard, dispersed to attend to their own safety: nothing was thought of in the army but the urgent pangs of hunger, or the terrible severity of the cold. If a soldier dropped, his comrades instantly fell upon him; and, before life was extinct, tore from him his cloak, his money, and the bread which he might have in his bosom;¹ when he died, one of them frequently sat upon his body, for the sake

¹ Fain, ii.
419. Bout.
ii. 408.
Chamb. iii.
220, 223.
Ségur, ii.
403, 407.

* The escape of Napoleon from the wreck of the grand army, recalls the parallel flight of Xerxes from the disaster of Salamis, recorded in ancient story. "*Erat res spectaculo digna, et estimatione sortis humanæ rerum varietate miranda:—in exiguo latentem videre navigio quem paulo ante vix æquor omne capiebat: carentem etiam omni servorum ministerio, cujus exercitus propter multitudinem terris graves erant.*"—JUSTIN. ii. 4, 7. As the history of Napoleon approaches its catastrophe, the similarity of the events to the mournful catastrophe of ancient story is frequent and striking.

† "*Mox quod in perditis rebus accidit: omnes præcipere, nemo exsequi.*" TACITUS, iii. 73.

of the temporary warmth which it afforded ; and when it became cold, fell beside his companion to rise no more.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

The watch-fires at night were surrounded by circles of exhausted men, who crowded like spectres round the blazing piles ; they sat back to back, closely pressed together for mutual warmth and support. As the wood was consumed, they continued to gaze with indifference on the decaying embers, incapable either of rising to renew the fuel, or of seeking another bivouac ; and when at length the flames were extinguished, sank into death beside the ashes.* The position of these melancholy bivouacs was marked in the morning by the circles of dead bodies which surrounded them, and attested the successive groups who, during the night, had been attracted by their light. The appearance of the corpses was very peculiar, and inexpressibly frightful. The cold stopped the circulation exactly as it had been when exercise ceased : the bodies sat erect and stiff in the frozen piles : the countenances were as coloured, sometimes even as florid, as in life ; the eyes were open, and but for the motionless eyeball and ice-cold cheek, it was impossible to distinguish the dead from the living.¹†

93.
Frightful
appearance
of the night
bivouacs.

¹ René-
Bourgeois,
Tableau de
la Camp. de
Moscow,
87, 94.
Fain, ii. 419.
Chamb. iii.
220, 225,
Ségur, ii.
403, 410.
Lab. 406,
407. Bout.
ii. 408.
Chamb. iii.
149, 164.

Several of the soldiers became mad from this frightful accumulation of disasters ; a still larger number were reduced to a state of fixed idiocy, which rendered them incapable of the smallest effort. Their eyes fixed, their countenances haggard, they marched on amidst the crowd without knowing what they were doing ; and, if addressed or asked where they were, replied only by the stupid

94.
Effects of
those disas-
ters on the
minds of the
soldiers.

* “Nec fallebat ipsos morti locum eligere, cum immobiles vitalis calor linqueret : sed grata erat pigritia corporum fatigatis ; nec recusabant extingui quiescendo.”—QUINTUS CURTIUS, viii. 4.

† Exactly the same thing in similar circumstances of disaster had been observed of the soldiers of Alexander. “Memoriæ proditum est, quosdam applicatos arborum truncis, et non solum viventibus, sed et inter se colloquentibus similes, esse conspectos ; durante adhuc habitu, in quo mors quemque deprehenderat.”—QUINTUS CURTIUS, viii. 4.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

glare of insanity. Commands, outrages, blows, were alike unavailing to rouse them from that state of fatuity: they moved on mechanically till night, when they sank to the ground and perished. Moral courage was, with a very few exceptions, found to be wanting even in the bravest. Overwhelmed by the horrors of their situation, penetrated by the idea that they could not escape death, almost all fell into a state of profound dejection, which rendered them incapable of the smallest mental or physical efforts. Deaf to every representation of the danger of their situation, they persisted, when not entirely worn out, in declaring themselves unable to move farther, and sitting down, generally on the dead body of a comrade, resigned themselves to rest, to sleep, and death. Those whose resolution was proof against the depressing influences, rarely in the end escaped the same fate, though their vigour extended their sufferings for a longer period. Doggedly they marched on like spectres, with their eyes fixed before them, as if nothing could divert them from their resolution to get forward. But at length their limbs tottered, their steps became shorter and less frequent, they fell behind their comrades, deep sighs were uttered with their failing breath, tears rolled down their cheeks, their knees smote each other, and they fell to rise no more.¹

¹ René-
Bourgeois,
Tableau de
la Camp. de
Moscow,
98, 106.
Chamb. iii.
222, 224.

95.
Physical
effects of the
extreme
cold.

Such was the severity of the cold which succeeded the passage of the Beresina, that nothing but continual motion, even in the day-time, could resist its effects. Hardly any one escaped unhurt; few of those whose strength preserved life, escaped frightful mutilation, often worse than death itself. The slightest cessation of exercise was followed by a congelation of the blood in the veins, fatal in the first instance to the limb—ere long, if continued, to existence. If the exhaustion of fatigue, or the imperious necessity of sleep, closed their eyelids, in a few minutes they fell into a deep lethargic slumber, and were soon reduced to a frozen lifeless mass. Upon the youthful

soldiers of Loison's division, composed in great part of German conscripts, who had for the first time entered upon a campaign, the frost was in an especial manner fatal. Young, fresh, unwearied, they neither perished of fatigue, nor of the weakening effects of continued hunger, like the veterans of the grand army; the terrible cold mowed them down at once, when in all the vigour of life. A few minutes, sometimes a few seconds, completed the work of destruction. First they staggered of a sudden, then for a short space marched with faltering steps; their heads became swollen, their countenances florid, as if the blood was forcibly retained in its vessels. Symptoms of paralysis next appeared; their knees shook, their arms dropped lifeless by their sides; their muskets fell from their hands, and soon they sank down by the wayside. Death, however, did not immediately close their sufferings; often they raised themselves half up on their elbows, and with fixed and haggard look watched the crowd which was passing by; their inflamed eyes exuded tears mixed with blood, and the forced contraction of the muscles gave a frightful expression to their countenances, which continued even after life was extinct.¹

CHAP.
LXXIII.
1812.

¹ René-
Bourgeois,
Camp. de
Moscow,
128, 134.
Chamb. iii.
224, 226.

In vain numerous detachments joined the army between Smorgoni and Wilna; the terrible severity of the cold, and the sight of the sufferings of the grand army, speedily effected their dissolution. The division of Loison, ten thousand strong, which marched from Königsberg to reinforce its wasted ranks, and came up with it shortly after the Emperor's departure, was almost totally destroyed in a few days. Three skeleton battalions only reached their unhappy comrades. Twenty thousand recruits had joined between the Beresina and Wilna; and yet scarcely forty thousand of the whole troops reached that city, all in the last stage of misery and despair. Of these only nine thousand three hundred were combatants, the rest being a famished multitude. During this disastrous retreat the Russians incessantly pressed upon the retiring

96.
Prodigious
losses of the
detachments
which joined
the French
army.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

1 Bout. ii.
407, 408.
Lab. 405,
409. Fain,
ii. Chamb.
iii. 947.

army. On leaving Smorgoni, their rearguard was attacked by General Tchaplitz, and totally destroyed, with the loss of twenty-five cannon and three thousand prisoners; between Smorgoni and Ochixiany he again came up with the enemy, and dispersed the new rearguard, with the loss of sixty-one pieces of cannon and four thousand prisoners; and at Medniki he captured sixteen cannon and thirteen hundred prisoners. On the road to Wilna he took thirty-one pieces, and penetrated into the town, where the French were hardly established; while Platoff proceeded on the road to Kowno, and cut off a whole column of one thousand men, with twenty-eight pieces of artillery.¹

97.
Causes
which pre-
served the
French from
total des-
truction.

If the Russians had been aware of the state to which the French army was by this time reduced, and had possessed a force capable of taking advantage of it, the miserable remains of the grand army might, in the last stages of the retreat, have been captured with very little resistance. But they were in a great measure ignorant of the extent of the disaster which had befallen their enemies, and were themselves labouring under calamities scarcely less appalling. During the last four weeks of the campaign, Wittgenstein's corps alone sustained a loss of ten thousand men, though there was scarcely any fighting: the main army, under Kutusoff, was so fearfully weakened by the unparalleled vigour and rapidity of the pursuit, as well as the extremity of cold, that rest became absolutely necessary after the actions at Krasnoi, and it reached Wilna only thirty-five thousand strong.* The Russians could not conceive the extent to which the French corps were reduced. If it had been known in Germany, the Tugenbund would at once have arisen in arms, and the mutilated remnant of the grand army would have been exterminated ere it reached the Elbe. But no complete corps or marshals had been taken;² the

* Chamb.
iii. 91, 93.
Claus. 98,
99, 215,
216.

* "Bellum adeo cladium atrocitate terribile, ut, si quis conferat damna utriusque populi, similia victo sit populus qui vicit.—FLORUS, iii. 14, 7.

intercepted orders were all found to be directed by Berthier to the commanders of corps, as in the most prosperous periods of former campaigns; and it could not have been supposed that these orders were addressed to generals at the head only of six hundred or a thousand men.*

It is a very remarkable circumstance, but attested by the most unexceptionable medical evidence, that during the whole of this dreadful retreat, the French, to whom the cold was unusual, bore it better than the Russians; and that of the survivors almost all were Italians or Frenchmen from the provinces to the *south* of the Loire. "The inhabitants," says Larrey, who was chief physician to Napoleon in the campaign, "of the southern countries of Europe bore the cold better than the natives of the northern and moister climates—such as the Hanoverians, the Dutch, the Prussians, and the other German people: the Russians themselves, from what I learned at Wilna, suffered more from the cold than the French. Three thousand men, being the best soldiers of the Guard, partly cavalry and partly infantry, *almost all natives of the southern provinces of France*, were the only persons who really withstood the cruel vicissitudes of the retreat.†

* The following was the strength of the whole *combatants* of the grand army which reached Smorgoni, three days after the passage of the Beresina, viz. :—

	Infantry.	Cavalry.
Old Guard,	2000	1200
Young Guard,	800	
Rearguard, under Ney,	1800	300
Victor's corps,	2000	100
Davoust's and Eugene's corps,	400	
	<hr/> 7000	<hr/> 1600

—CHAMBRAY, iii. 94; and NEY to BERTHIER, Dec. 2, 1812.—*Ibid.*

† A similar fact has been observed regarding the British troops in India, who in general bear the fatigue of forced marches under the burning sun of that climate better than the native Hindoos, who have been habituated to it all their lives. The reason seems to be the same in both cases: viz., that the inhabitants of the temperate regions of the globe, having their constitutions ripened by a more genial climate, are able to bear the extremes both of heat and cold better than those whose constitutions have been weakened either by the severities of the arctic, or the relaxations of the tropical regions.

CHAP.
LXXXIII.
1812.

98.
The Russians suffered more from the cold than the French.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Larrey, iv.
111, 114.

They were the miserable remains of an army of four hundred thousand men, whom the inhabitants of the country had seen defiling over the bridge at Kowno, six months before, in all the pride of apparently irresistible strength.”¹

99.
Capture of
Wilna, and
immense
losses in its
vicinity.

The troops had hardly begun to taste the sweets of repose, and to refresh themselves from the immense magazines which Wilna contained, when the terrible cry arose that the Cossacks were upon them : they were roused by the cannon of the Russians, and compelled to hasten their retreat. In the confusion of leaving the city, the Old Guard itself was for a short time dispersed, and the feeble appearance of order hitherto preserved disappeared ; the officers marched pell-mell with the soldiers : generals were seen begging succour from the soldiers whom they had so recently commanded. Even in this extremity, however, the wonted courage of Marshal Ney was not wanting. He voluntarily hastened to the rear, and out of the confused mass formed a small corps, chiefly composed of the troops recently come up with Loison, with which he arrested the efforts of the enemy. His system for covering the retreat continued the same from Wiazma to the Niemen. He first marched forward to a considerable distance, often during the night ; he then took post on the most favourable ground he could find, and then repelled the attacks of the first enemies who approached. When they became so considerable that he could no longer keep his ground, he retired, still fighting ; and when he had got in some degree the start of his enemies, took post again, and quietly awaited their approach. The Russians found in Wilna, besides immense magazines of every description, above fourteen thousand soldiers, and two hundred and fifty officers, who were incapable of marching farther, and preferred becoming prisoners of war to a longer continuance of their sufferings. On leaving that city, a frightful scene of confusion arose, in consequence of the horses drawing the waggons which conveyed the

treasure being unable to ascend the ridge of Mount Ponari, which required to be passed on the road to the Niemen. They were in consequence abandoned, and became the prey of the common soldiers, who obtained a deceitful gleam of prosperity by the plunder of six millions of francs, (£240,000.) The private purse of the Emperor was saved, by being broken up and distributed among the officers of the Imperial Guard. The whole remaining baggage of the army was lost on this fatal ascent.¹ ✓

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Lab. 416,
421. Ségur,
ii. 418, 423.
Bout. ii.
411, 412.
Larrey,
iv 167.
Chamb. iii.
95. Bign.
xi. 183, 184.

At length, on the 12th December, the French arrived at Kowno, on the Niemen, when three thousand prisoners were taken by Platoff: and on the 13th they passed the bridge, in number about twenty thousand, of whom five-sixths had never seen the Kremlin.* Thus, not more than three thousand of the vast host with which Napoleon passed Smolensko in the beginning of summer, left the Russian territory; and out of five hundred and fifty thousand combatants who had crossed the Niemen since June, twenty thousand alone escaped the disasters of the campaign. As the Imperial Guard defiled over the bridge, an old grenadier extended on the ground attracted the attention of his comrades. The crowd respected his undaunted air, his decorations, and his three insignia. With a placid eye he viewed the approach of death; and, disregarding the other passengers, uttering no supplications, he waited till one of his comrades was near, and then, collecting all his strength, he raised himself on his elbow, and exclaimed to the soldier about to succour him, "Your assistance is in vain, my friend: the only favour which I have to request is, that you will prevent the enemy from profaning the marks of distinction which I have gained in combating them."² Carry to my captain this

100.
Passage of
the bridge
of Kowno.

² Lab. 426,
427. Bout.
ii. 413.
Ségur, ii.
430.
Chamb. iii.
164. Claus.
99, 100.
Bign. xi.
186.

* "Was there ever anything like this exhibited in the world before? The remains of 500,000 men, who had crossed the Niemen in such splendid order in June, now recrossed it, pursued by a detachment of cavalry!"—CHAMBRAY, iii. 134.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

decoration, which was given me on the field of Austerlitz, and this sabre, which I used in the battle of Friedland."

With these words he expired ; and the sabre and cross were carried to the Old Guard, now reduced to three hundred men, but still marching in serried groups, and preserving even to death their martial and undaunted air.

101.

Heroic conduct of Ney on this occasion.

The heroic Ney still covered the rear when the troops were defiling over the bridge. Four times the rearguard had melted away under his command, and as often his example and activity had re-formed a band for the protection of the army. He arrived at Kowno destitute of troops ; a few hundred of the Old Guard alone retained the use of their arms, and they were already defiling over the river. Instantly collecting seven hundred fresh troops whom he found in the town, and planting twenty-four pieces of cannon remaining there on the redoubts, he made good the post during the whole day against the efforts of the enemy. On the following day he still continued the defence ; but, finding that his troops melted away or deserted him, he seized a musket, and with difficulty rallied thirty men to defend the gate of Wilna. At length, when the passage of the troops who could be persuaded to move was completed, he slowly retired through the streets and across the river, still facing the enemy, and was the LAST OF THE GRAND ARMY who left the Russian territory.¹

¹ Bout. ii. 414. Ségur, ii. 433, 434. Lab. 428. Chamb. iii. 172, 178.

102.

Appearance of Ney at Gumbinnen after passing the Niemen ; and passage of that river by the rearguard.

The first place on the German side of the Niemen where any of the persons who had got across could rest, was Gumbinnen. General Mathieu Dumas, who had with great difficulty reached that place, in consequence of a malady under which he had laboured ever since leaving Moscow, had just entered the house of a French physician, where he had lodged when passing there before on his entrance into Russia, when a man entered, wrapped up in a large cloak, with a long beard, his visage blackened with gunpowder, his whiskers half-burned by fire, but

his eyes still sparkling with undecayed lustre. "Here I am at last. What! General Dumas, do you not know me?" "No. Who are you?" "I am the rearguard of the grand army—Marshal Ney. I have fired the last musket-shot on the bridge of Kowno; I have thrown into the Niemen the last of our arms; and I have walked hither, as you see me, across the forests." With respectful solicitude, General Dumas received the hero of the retreat; the benevolent host relieved his immediate necessities; and he soon after set out with Dumas, in the calèche of the latter, on the road for Königsberg. When the troops, on leaving Kowno, arrived at the point where the passage had been effected five months before; when they beheld those heights, then crowded with splendid battalions, now covered by a miserable band of fugitives, and passed the remains of the bridges, now deserted, which then groaned under the march of glittering squadrons, the magnitude of the contrast, notwithstanding their present sufferings, brought tears into the eyes even of the common soldiers. Casting a last look on the shores of those savage regions—then so ardently desired; since, the scene of such grievous suffering—they plunged into the forest, and, abandoning every appearance of military order, dispersed like private travellers over the boundless plains of Poland.¹

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Dumas,
Souv. iii.
485. Lab.
427. Ségur,
ii. 429, 458.

The only corps of the enemy which still remained in Russia were those of Marshal Macdonald, twenty-nine thousand strong, which was still in the neighbourhood of Riga, and of Schwartzenberg and Reynier, which was in the southern provinces. The design of Kutusoff was to cut off the first-named general from the Niemen, and throw his corps back upon the peninsula of Courland, from whence escape, except by sea, was impossible. For this purpose, the corps of Wittgenstein was directed to descend the right bank of the Niemen to Kowno, and move upon Gumbinnen to cut him off from the Vistula; while the garrison of Riga, now considerably reinforced, pressed

103.
Operations
against Mac-
donald near
Riga, and
evacuation
of the Rus-
sian terri-
tory by
Schwart-
zenberg.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

upon his rear. On the 18th December, Macdonald, who appears to have been totally forgotten during the confusion of the retreat, began to retire from Riga; while the Marquis Paulucci, governor of Riga, detached ten thousand men to harass his retreat. General Diebitch, who commanded the advanced guard of Wittgenstein, advanced so rapidly, that on the 25th he came up with the retiring army, and boldly threw himself, with only two thousand men, between the French troops of Macdonald and the Prussian auxiliaries in his corps, commanded by General York, though the two together amounted to eighteen thousand men. The garrison of Riga, pressing him in rear, and the troops of Wittgenstein coming up to separate him from Macdonald, York conceived it no longer necessary to risk his army by an adherence to their forced alliance, and on the 30th December signed a convention with General Diebitch; in virtue of which the Prussian troops, to the number of ten thousand, became neutral, and only awaited the commands of the King of Prussia to unite themselves to the victorious Russians. Deprived by this defection of one-half of his troops, Macdonald lost no time in falling back to Königsberg, which he reached on the 3d January, with the loss, in various skirmishes during his retreat, of fifteen hundred killed and wounded, and above one thousand prisoners. The slowness of Wittgenstein's advance, who could not possibly move rapidly, from the exhausted state of his troops, preserved the remains of his corps from total destruction. On the other side, Prince Schwartzemberg, learning the disasters of the grand army, and finding that the corps of Sacken opposed to him was strongly reinforced, fell back to the grand-duchy of Warsaw, and finally evacuated the Russian territory on the 7th January.¹

Jan. 7,

1813.

¹ Bout. ii.

413, 415,

445. Ségur,

ii. 460, 464.

While these unparalleled disasters were destroying the noble array of France, Napoleon was rapidly continuing his journey through Lithuania and Poland. On the road

to Osmiana, before arriving at Wilna, he narrowly escaped being made prisoner by the Russian partisan Seslawin, who could easily have taken him if he had known he was there. On the 6th December he reached Wilna. In conversation with Maret there, he made no attempt to disguise the extent of his losses. "As to the army," said he, "it does not exist: for you cannot call an army a troop of stragglers wandering here and there to seek subsistence. One, however, might still be collected, if you could collect stores sufficient to feed the famished troops, and give clothing to men marching under a cold of 20° below zero. My orders have not been executed: my military administration have foreseen and provided for nothing." Maret, upon this, laid before the Emperor a statement of the vast magazines which, in Wilna at least, were at the disposal of the army. "You restore me to life!" cried Napoleon. "Desire the King of Naples to rest the army eight days here, to restore the moral and physical condition of the soldiers—to impress a new character upon the retreat. Tell him that I reckon on him, and that he has the safety of the army in his hands." With these words he set out for Warsaw, in a sledge given him by a Polish gentleman, M. Wibeski. He had entered Russia at the head of five hundred thousand combatants—he left it, accompanied by a single aide-de-camp.¹

CHAP.
LXXXIII.

1812.

104.

Napoleon's
conversa-
tion with
Maret at
Wilna.¹ Chamb.
iii. 108, 110.

No words can express the astonishment of the inhabitants of Wilna, when the scattered remains of the French army began to drop in in frightful disorder, resembling rather a troop of beggars than a warlike array. They had seen the grand army, five months before, defile through their streets in all the pomp of war, in all the pride of irresistible strength. Maret had skilfully managed the government in Napoleon's absence, and so disguised the facts which he had communicated, that the people were in entire ignorance of the real events of the campaign. They believed, as they had been told, that

105.

Astonish-
ment in
Wilna when
the remains
of the
French army
arrived.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

the French had been victorious in every encounter ; that the Russians were on the point of submission ; that the imperial eagles had left Moscow only to shun a pestilential heap of ruins, and to obtain comfortable winter-quarters in the country they had conquered. It was in the midst of these gratifying official announcements that sinister rumours began to spread of a dreadful disaster which had befallen the grand army, and that they might, ere long, have its remains within their walls. Little credit, however, was given to these reports, which were set down to the machinations of the Russian faction ; the faith of the great majority in the star of the Emperor was too firm to be shaken. It may be conceived, then, what was the astonishment of the inhabitants, when the woful remains of the French army, clothed in furs, pelisses, and old carpets, great part mutilated by the cold, a still greater number without arms, began to enter, in utter confusion, and with hardly the vestige of military appearance. Consternation instantly seized every mind : the shops were all shut, and with speechless horror the inhabitants listened to the dreadful details of which the appearance of the troops gave such fearful confirmation.¹

¹ Chamb.
iii. 102,
105, 125.

106.
Sufferings
of Poland
during the
campaign.

During the time that this long course of disasters was befalling the grand army, Warsaw and the grand-duchy of the same name had been the victims of the most uninterrupted suffering. Great as was the spirit of the people, and ardent as was their desire to regain their national independence, and throw off the hated yoke of Russia, they had yet sunk under the enormous burdens imposed upon them by the continual passage of the troops, and the enormous requisitions of the French Emperor. The grand-duchy of Warsaw, though possessing only a population of little more than four millions of souls, had already, during the campaign, furnished eighty-five thousand men to the grand army, and their swords had drunk as deep of the Russian blood as those of any troops

in the vast array, both at Smolensko and Borodino. This supply of men, however, great as it was, was far from keeping pace with the gigantic expectations of Napoleon ; and the Polish battalions were so completely lost in the immense multitude of armed men by whom they were surrounded, that Napoleon frequently complained that he had never seen any Poles at all in his army. Not only, however, had the Poles been there, but alone of the grand army they had preserved their artillery entire, and brought them back with deserved pride to Warsaw. This was owing to their alone having taken the precaution to take with them the means of frosting their horses—a fact which demonstrates the disastrous effect of the total neglect in that particular which obtained in the other corps of the army.¹

Nevertheless, situated as the grand-duchy was, it was truly surprising how its inhabitants had been capable of making the efforts which they actually did. The pay of the troops had long since ceased ; the government, deeply in debt, was unable to borrow money from any of the capitalists in Europe ; and the greatest proprietors had been obliged to pay eighty per cent for the money they were under the necessity of raising to meet the requisitions. Prince Czartorinski was compelled to leave Warsaw from absolute inability to maintain his family there ; and the Princess Radziwil, wife of the richest noble in Poland, was so reduced, that she could not command money to send home two lady's-maids whom she had brought from France and England. The whole public authorities were six months in arrear of their salaries ; and those to whom the great proprietors were indebted were unable to extract from them a single farthing in payment. In the midst of this universal misery, the requisitions for the grand army were incessant. No representations could convince Napoleon of the state of impoverishment to which Poland had been reduced ; taxes, at his command, were laid on, but they produced nothing ;² and movable

CHAP.
LXXIII.
—
1812.

¹ Oginski,
iv. 4, 5.
De Pradt,
Varsovie
en 1812,
84, 89.
Bign. xi.
207.

107.
Excessive
penury to
which the
inhabitants
of all ranks
were re-
duced.

² De Pradt,
l'Ambas-
sade à Var-
sovie en
1812, 84,
89, 184.
Oginski,
iv. 5.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

108.
Napoleon
arrives at
Warsaw.

columns of troops traversed the country in every direction, seizing without mercy the agricultural produce of the peasants, who were universally reduced to beggary by the exactions.

In the midst of this scene of unparalleled suffering, it was announced to the Abbé de Pradt one morning early, on the 10th of December, that a travelling-carriage in great haste had driven into the Hotel d'Angleterre at Warsaw, and that his immediate presence was required. He lost no time in going there, and found in the courtyard a small travelling britschka, placed, without wheels, on a coarse sledge made of four pieces of rough fir-wood, which had been almost dashed to pieces in entering the gateway. Two other travelling-carriages, still ruder in their construction, stood beside it. Caulaincourt speedily appeared, and, taking the Abbé by the hand, led him into a small dark apartment, with the windows half-shut, and in a corner of which a servant girl was striving in vain to light a fire with green damp billets of wood. A figure, wrapped up in a rich pelisse, was placed with its face to the fire as the Abbé entered; it turned round on hearing the sound of footsteps, and Napoleon stood before him.¹

¹ De Pradt,
203, 210.109.
His remark-
able conver-
sation with
the Abbé
de Pradt.

"Ah! is it you, Ambassador?" said the Emperor. "You have given me much uneasiness," replied the Abbé, with deep emotion; "but I see you well, and I am content." After some further conversation, the Abbé, upon the Emperor inquiring what contributions could be furnished by the grand-duchy, explained to him the state of destitution to which Poland had been reduced, and the great exertions it had made for furnishings for his army. "What!" rejoined the Emperor, "I have not seen a Pole in my ranks." "There were eighty-two thousand, nevertheless," replied the Abbé; "but they were lost in the immensity of your majesty's armament." "What would the Poles be at?" rejoined the Emperor. "To be Prussians if they cannot be Poles?"

And then why not Russians?" with a sarcastic air. "Come, Abbé, we must raise ten thousand Polish Cossacks: a lance and a horse are enough for each man. With them we will soon stop the Russians. From the sublime to the ridiculous is but a step. Dangers! I have seen none of them. I am never so well as in agitation: the greater the tumult, the better I feel. None but the *rois fainéants* grow fat in their palaces. Horseback and camps for me. *From the sublime to the ridiculous is but a step.* I see you are all in alarm here. Bah! The army is superb. I have a hundred and twenty thousand men: I have always beaten the Russians; they never venture to stand against me. They are no longer the soldiers of Eylau and Friedland.

CHAP.
LXXXIII.
1812.

"We shall maintain our position at Wilna. I am going to raise three hundred thousand men. Success will embolden the Russians. I shall give them two or three battles on the Oder, and in six months I shall be again on the Niemen. I have more weight on the throne than at the head of the army: I left the troops, indeed, with regret; but it was necessary, to watch over Austria and Prussia. All that has happened is nothing; it is the effect of the climate, and that is all. The enemy are nothing: I have beat them wherever I met them. They thought they would cut me off at the Beresina; but I soon got quit of that fool of an admiral, (I never could pronounce his name.) Their position was superb; fifteen hundred toises of a marsh—a river. But what then? I got through them all. It is then you see who have the strong minds. I have often been harder pushed before. At Marengo, I was beaten till six o'clock at night; next day I was master of all Italy. At Essling, they thought they would stop me; that Archduke has published I know not what on the subject. I could not prevent the Danube from rising sixteen feet in one night; but for that, it was all over with Austria. But it was written in heaven that I should marry an archduchess (*smiling.*) So

110.
His state-
ment of his
designs.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

also in Russia. Could I prevent it from freezing ? They came and told me every morning that I had lost ten thousand horses during the night. Well : a good journey to them ! Our Norman horses are less hardy than the Russian ; they cannot resist more than nine degrees of cold. It is the same with the Germans. Go and look for the Saxons or the Bavarians. You won't find one of them alive. Perhaps they may say I lingered too long at Moscow. Possibly I did so ; but the weather was fine, and I expected peace : the winter set in before its usual time. I sent Lauriston, on the 5th of October, to negotiate for peace ; I thought of going to St Petersburg ; I had time enough to winter there, or in the south of Russia.

111.
Extraordi-
nary ideas
which he
expressed.

“The King of Naples will maintain himself at Wilna. Politics are a great drama ; he who ventures nothing will win nothing. *From the sublime to the ridiculous is but a step.* The Russians have shown what they are ; they have clouds of Cossacks : that nation, after all, is something. The crown peasants love the government ; the nobles have mounted on horseback ; it was proposed to me to declare the slaves free ; I would not do so : a general massacre would have followed. I made a regular war on Alexander ; but who could have thought they would have struck such a stroke as the burning of Moscow ? They attribute it to us, but it was truly themselves who did it. It would have done honour to ancient Rome. I will have nothing to do with the *corps diplomatique*. They are nothing but titled spies employed to send bulletins of what we are about to their courts. I won't go through Silesia——Aha ! Prussia ! *From the sublime to the ridiculous is but a step.*” The Emperor ran on in this way for above three hours, during which time the fire, which had at length kindled, gradually went out, and all in the apartment were perishing of cold ; but he himself experienced no inconvenience, so completely was his mind absorbed in the subjects of the conversation. At length, it being

announced that the carriage was ready, Napoleon and Caulaincourt mounted the sledge, and upon the persons present inquiring anxiously for his health, he exclaimed, "I never was better : If I had the devil himself on board, I think I would not be a bit the worse !" With these words he waved adieu to his attendants, set out in his humble conveyance, and was soon lost in the gloom of a Polish winter. In setting off, the sledge was all but overturned by running against the gate-post of the courtyard of the inn.¹

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ De Pradt,
212, 220.

The scattered troops of the grand army continued to retreat through the Polish territory, by the route of Königsberg, still pursued by the Russians, who continued to take numbers of prisoners. The town of Königsberg was speedily filled with sick and wounded men : above ten thousand were soon collected at that town, almost all of whom fell into the hands of the Russians. The French generals made a vain attempt to rally the troops on the Vistula ; but their diminished numbers precluded all hope of maintaining that position. Numbers who had escaped the horrors of the retreat, fell victims to the sudden change of temperature, and the resumption of the usages of civilised life which followed their return to Prussia. The shattered remains of the army were collected in Dantzic, to secure that important military position. Thirty-five thousand men, of seventeen different nations, were there assembled, and the remainder fell back to Posen on the Oder. The Russians stopped the march of their troops, already almost exhausted, at Kalisch, in the end of January ; and thus terminated this memorable campaign.²

112.

Retreat of
the remains
of the grand
army to
Königsberg
and Dantzic.² Ségur, ii.
471, 473.
Bout. ii.
417, 420.
Fain, ii.
280.

On the 22d December, the Emperor Alexander arrived at Wilna, and hastened to award to the troops the rewards which their glorious services merited. He found the city overwhelmed with prisoners and wounded men ; contagious diseases speedily appeared ; and the mortality soon became excessive both among the victors and the van-

113.

Arrival of
Alexander
at Wilna,
and horrible
state of the
hospitals.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

quished. History has not preserved a more noble instance of fortitude and humanity than was exhibited by that great man on this occasion. The condition of the prisoners till his arrival had been horrible beyond conception, Huddled together in hospitals, without either fire, water, medicines, beds, or straw, they lay on the hard floor, often in the last stage of exhaustion or disease. Hundreds, in consequence, died every day, whose bodies were thrown out of the windows into the streets by the soldiers in attendance ; but their place was immediately supplied by multitudes of others, who crawled continually into these abodes of wretchedness, often only to draw their last breath within their walls. Hard biscuit was all they had for food ; and their only drink the snow which the least injured among them brought in from the streets and courtyards of the buildings. The frightful accumulation of gangrened wounds and mortal sickness ; the multitudes who crowded not only the apartments, but even the stairs of the hospitals ; and the putrid smell of above six thousand bodies which lay unburied in their vicinity, had engendered a dreadful contagious fever, of which hundreds died every day, and which, for several succeeding years, spread its ravages through every country in Europe.¹

¹ Charnb.
iii. 146, 147.
Ségur, ii.
467.
Oginski, iv.
99, 100.

Into these hidden dens of misery the Emperor Alexander and his brother Constantine immediately entered, on their arrival at Wilna, on the 22d of December.

“ ———Immediately a place
Before his eyes appear'd, sad, noisome, dark ;
A lazarus-house it seem'd ; wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseased ; all maladies
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence ;
And over them triumphant Death his dart
Shook, but delayed to strike, though oft invoked
With vows, as their chief good and final hope.”*

Profoundly moved by the dreadful spectacle of human

* MILTON's *Paradise Lost*, xi. 476.

misery which was there exhibited, the Czar instantly took the most efficacious measures to assuage the universal suffering. Without casting a thought upon the consideration that most of these unfortunate wretches had been his enemies, he, along with Constantine, distributed money largely among them. His own physicians, including the able and intrepid Dr Wylie, who never left his person, were sent to make the necessary arrangements for putting a stop to these horrors. Out of his own purse the Emperor discharged a large part of the arrears of pay due to the troops of his enemies, and established vast hospitals in the palaces of the city, where the French sick and wounded were placed beside and equally well treated with the Russian. The dead bodies in the streets were collected and burned: they amounted to the astonishing number of seventeen thousand. The total number consumed there, and brought in from the vicinity, exceeded thirty thousand. The Grand-duke Constantine rivalled his brother in these acts of mercy. Several of the wounded were brought to his apartments, and tended there; and he, in consequence, caught the prevailing epidemic, and was brought to the verge of the grave, though, at length, the strength of his constitution carried him through its dangers. Shortly after, all the sovereigns of Europe whose subjects were lying in the hospitals at Wilna, transmitted money to the Emperor to relieve their distresses. Napoleon alone, engrossed with the cares of his situation, sent none. Alexander and Constantine, however, were indefatigable in their attentions to the prisoners during several weeks that they remained at Wilna; and the Emperor, on the very day of his arrival, published a general amnesty to the Polish nation for any part they might have taken in the insurrection against his government; terminating thus a campaign of unexampled dangers and glory by deeds of unprecedented mercy.^{1*}

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

114.

Humanity
and courage
of Alexander.

Dec. 22.

¹ Chamb. iii.

145, 148.

Oginski, iii.

99, 100.

Bout. ii.

418. Ségur,

ii. 467.

* The author is happy to be able to confirm the preceding account of the conduct of the Emperor Alexander and the Grand-duke Constantine on this

CHAP.
LXXXIII.

1812.

115.

Noble pro-
clamation of
Alexander
to his
soldiers.

On the last day of the year, Alexander addressed from Wilna a noble proclamation to the soldiers, in which, without underrating their glorious exploits, he ascribed the success which had been attained mainly to the protection of Heaven. "Soldiers! The year is past—that glorious and ever-memorable year in which you have hurled to the dust the pride of the insolent aggressor. It is past; but your heroic deeds will never pass; time will never efface their recollection: they are present in the hearts of your contemporaries; they will live in the gratitude of posterity. You have purchased with your blood the independence of your country against so many powers leagued together for its subjugation. You have acquired a title to the gratitude of Russia, and the admiration of the world. You have proved by your fidelity, your valour, and your perseverance, that against the hearts filled with love to God and devotion to their country, the most formidable efforts of the enemy are like the furious waves of the ocean, which break in vain on the solid rocks, and leave nothing but scattered foam around them. Desirous to distinguish all those who have shared in the immortal exploits, I have caused medals to be struck from silver which has been blessed by our holy church. They bear the date of the memorable year 1812. Suspended by a blue ribbon, they will serve to decorate the warlike breasts which have served as a buckler to their country. You have all shared the same fatigues and dangers; you have but one heart and one will; you are all worthy to wear this honourable recompense; and you will all feel proud of the decoration. May your enemies tremble when they see it on your bosoms!¹ May they know that under these medals beat hearts animated by an imperishable tie, because it is not founded on ambi-

¹ Chamb.
iii. 169.

occasion, which is given by all the historians, both French and Russian, who have treated on the subject, by the account which he himself received in Paris, in May 1814, from his esteemed friends, Sir James Wylie and Sir William Crichton, physicians to the Emperor, who were engaged with him in these heroic acts of mercy.

tion or impiety, but on the immutable basis of patriotism and religion !”

From the most moderate calculations, it appears that the losses of the French during the campaign were 550,000 men and 900 pieces of cannon.* The total force which entered at first was 610,000, and 37,000 joined in the course of the campaign—in all, 647,000, of whom 600,000 were combatants.† The number of those who escaped from Russia was about 85,000 ; of whom 35,000 were Austrians and 18,000 Prussians, on the wings of the grand army ; so that the survivors of the proper French army were not above 32,000, out of above 600,000 combatants who from first to last had entered the Russian territory. The annals of the world afford no example of so complete an overthrow of so vast an armament. The losses of the Russians, especially during the advance from Moscow, owing to the severity of the weather, were very great, and almost equalled those of the French. Only 35,000 of Kutusoff’s army reached Wilna ; and of these, 18,000 were soon laid up in the hospitals. At Kalisch, when the campaign was finished, not more than 30,000 men could be assembled round the headquarters of the Emperor Alexander ; but the number rapidly increased by the junction of convalescents, and detachments from the interior.¹

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

116.

Losses of
the French
during the
campaign,
and of the
Russians.

¹ Gourg. ii.
199, 214.
Bout. ii.
446. Aperçu
sur la Cam-
pagne de
1813, 37.
Chamb. iii.
134. Claus.
94, 100.

The Russian campaign having been the chief cause of the overthrow of Napoleon’s power, and having substi-

* They are thus stated by Boutourlin :—

Slain in battle, soldiers,	125,000
Prisoners, generals,	48
———— officers,	3,000
———— soldiers,	190,000
Died of cold, fatigue, and famine,	132,000
Total loss,	450,048
Eagles and standards taken,	75
Cannon,	929

—BOUTOURLIN, ii. 446.

† See Appendix, B, Chap. LXXIII.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

117.
Reflections
on the mili-
tary causes
of this pro-
digious
overthrow.

tuted the colossus of Russian ambition for the terrors of French predominance, has given rise to numerous reflections and much party spirit. The partisans of the French Emperor have incessantly urged that the destruction of the armament was solely owing to the severity of the winter; that the Russians were beaten in every encounter, and displayed both less conduct and courage than on former occasions; and that, but for the occurrence of circumstances which human wisdom could neither foresee nor prevent, the triumph of the French arms would have been complete. On the other hand, the adherents of the Bourbons have maintained, that the overthrow was mainly owing to the impetuosity and want of foresight of the Emperor himself; that he made no provision for a retreat, and deviated from the fundamental principle of a base in military operations; and that, blindly trusting to his own good fortune, he rushed headlong on destruction, and precipitated his army into the horrors of winter, by obstinately clinging to Moscow, when reason and experience should equally have convinced him that he could not maintain himself in that position. An impartial review of the circumstances of the campaign will probably lead to the conclusion that there is some truth and much error in both these sets of opinions.

118.

Great ability of Napoleon generally in the campaign.

I. It seems the height of injustice to assert that the French Emperor did not display his wonted military talent, and the troops their accustomed bravery, in this expedition. The arrangements made for providing supplies for the army during its advance—the minute and almost incredible attention which he paid to details of every description, and in every department¹—the moral courage with which he fronted the dangers, and the admirable talent with which he extricated himself from the perils of the Beresina—have never been surpassed, and have extorted the admiration and obtained the generous praise of his enemies.² In reality, if the expedition failed from anything imputable to the French, it was the

¹ Gourg. ii.
App. p. 220,
ad finem.

² Bout. ii.
405. Claus.
210, 211.

immense extent of the preparations made to secure its success ; it being so true, in Montesquieu's words, that "distant expeditions fail from the very magnitude of the measures taken to carry them into execution."

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

II. It is equally in vain for the French to deny that the courage and skill of their adversaries were deserving of the highest admiration. To have retreated five hundred miles in front of an army double their own strength, without a single battalion being broken, or a single standard taken ; to have rallied the divisions originally separated, and fought a doubtful battle with superior forces in the heart of Russia ; to have enclosed the conqueror in an iron circle, and reduced him to the danger of starving in the centre of his conquests ; to have driven him to a ruinous retreat in the beginning of winter, and gained to the Russian arms all the advantages of the most decisive success, without the dangers by which it is usually purchased ; to have united forces from the extremities of Europe, and brought them to the critical point of the enemy's retreat, at the very moment when he was compelled to pass it—are achievements almost without a parallel in military enterprise, and certainly without an equal in military success.

119.
Heroic constancy of the
Russians.

III. The attempt so frequently made by the French to attribute the disasters of the campaign entirely to the severity of the climate, is perfectly hopeless, and has, in fact, been abandoned by their ablest military writers. The reasons of this are sufficiently obvious.¹ Supposing it were true that the immediate cause of the destruction of great part of the French army was the winter of Russia, the question remains—*What compelled them to brave its severity?* to leave the comfortable winter-quarters of Twer, Novgorod, or Kalouga, containing ample cantonments for their whole forces, and a country, according to Napoleon's account, as rich as the most fertile parts of France or Germany, and fall back on the ruined and wasted line of the Smolensko road ?² If they had really

120.
The severity of the Russian winter will not explain the disaster.
¹ Jom. iv. 206.

² 26th Bull. iv. 146.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

conquered their enemies in every encounter, and vanquished Russia but for the severity of its climate, what prevented them from obtaining the mastery of its resources, and maintaining themselves in the centre of the country, as they had done at Berlin and Vienna in former campaigns, or as the Allies subsequently did at Paris? It is obvious that the fact of their retreating implies the sense of an inferiority in the field, and an inability to maintain their ground before the growing forces of their enemies; and if this retreat was begun at a hazardous time, so much the greater must have been the pressure of that necessity which compelled them to embrace so grievous an alternative.

121.
The disasters were
owing to the
Russian
superiority.

IV. The truth, therefore, being apparent, that it was the superiority of Russia in light troops that rendered any attempt on the part of the French to maintain themselves in the interior of the country hopeless and impracticable; the disasters of the retreat were the immediate consequences of the advantages gained by their enemies, and ought in fairness to be ascribed to their conduct. If a seventy-four sends its antagonist to the bottom by a broadside, no one thinks of ascribing the victory to the elements, although the unhappy victims of defeat are swallowed up by the waves—not mowed down by the fire of the enemy. When the Duke of Brunswick retreated before Dumourier, in Champagne, the French were not slow in claiming the credit of the success, though it was mainly owing to the autumnal rains, and the dysentery which paralysed their invaders; when Pichegru conquered Flanders and Holland in 1794, the world justly ascribed the triumph to the French arms, though the losses of the Allies were in great part to be attributed to the cold, which was more severe than that which assailed the French army until after the passage of the Beresina;¹ and Napoleon never thought of transferring to the elements the glory of Austerlitz, although, according to his own account, one half of the Russian² loss was

¹ *Jom.* iv.
181.

² *Ante*, ch.
xl. § 133.

owing to the breaking of the ice on the lakes, over which their troops were driven, by the fire of the French artillery.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

122.

The cold
was unusu-
ally long of
setting in.

V. The cold of the winter in 1812 was neither premature nor extraordinary till the close of the campaign. Napoleon repeatedly expressed his astonishment in the bulletins at the fineness of the weather in October at Moscow, which he compared to the autumn at Fontainebleau,¹ and the winter was unusually late of setting in. The Russians themselves were astonished at its tardy advance, and began to fear that Providence, out of favour to Napoleon, had deprived them of its powerful aid.² The snow did not begin to fall till the 6th November; and before that time Marshal Davoust's corps alone had lost ten thousand men, since leaving Malo-Jaroslawitz, from the fatigues of the march;³ and the stragglers from the army already overwhelmed the rearguard. The cold in Holland in 1795, and in Poland in 1807, was more severe than that of Russia in 1812, till the troops approached Wilna;⁴ yet no disorder prevailed in the armies of Pichegru or Napoleon, who kept the field during both these seasons. Whereas the French, when they left the Beresina, had lost, since the opening of the campaign, three hundred and fifty thousand men and seven hundred pieces of cannon; and on the road from Moscow, not less than one hundred thousand, of whom more than half were prisoners of war.

¹ 25th Bull.
iv. 141.

² 26th Bull.

iv. 146.

³ 27th Bull.

iv. 147.

⁴ 29th Bull.

iv. 157.

² Lab. 241.

Ségur, ii.

171.

³ Ibid. ii.

170.

⁴ Jom. iv.

118.

123.

And it
affected the
Russians as
much as the
French.

⁵ Bout. ii.

235.

⁶ Gour. ii.

235. Chamb.

iii. 141.

⁷ Bour. ii.

231.

VI. The cold was as severe on the Russians as the French, and the diminution of their force for *present* operations as great from this cause as that of their adversaries. The army of Kutusoff left behind thirty thousand men between Malo-Jaroslawitz and Krasnoi, though they were hardly ever engaged with the enemy;⁵ and the French themselves admit, that when it arrived at Wilna it was only thirty-five thousand strong,⁶ though the loss in the battle of Krasnoi, the only serious action in which it was engaged on the road, was only two thousand men;⁷ and it left Malo-Jaroslawitz with at least one hundred

CHAP.
LXXXIII.

1812.

¹ Jom. iv.
171. Bout.
ii. 158.² Larrey's
Memoirs,
vol. iv. p.
111, 114.
Bour. ix.
136.

thousand combatants.¹ Nor is it difficult to account for so prodigious a loss, when it is considered that the highest medical authority has established the fact, that troops from the south of Europe bore the cold *better* than the Russians themselves, or the Poles, who had been accustomed to it from their infancy.² It is in vain, therefore, to seek for an explanation of the French disasters in a cause which, pressing with equal severity upon both armies, left their relative strength the same as before. Nor can it be alleged that the Russians, by marching over an unexhausted country, suffered less than their adversaries, who moved on the wasted line of their former march; for, if the prisoners of war be deducted, the Russian loss during their march appears to have been *greater* than that of Napoleon himself; and if they did gain an advantage by that circumstance, they owed it to the courage of their armies, or the skill of their generals, which threw their adversaries on that line ten days before the winter commenced.

124.

Most of
Napoleon's
losses took
place before
the cold set
in.

VII. But the decisive circumstance which proves that Napoleon's disasters in 1812 were owing, not to the severity of the climate, but to the natural consequences of his own measures, is to be found in the fact, now fully ascertained, that five-sixths of his losses had been sustained *before the cold weather began*; and that out of 302,000 men and 104,000 horses, which he in person led across the Niemen, there remained only 55,000 men, and 12,000 horses, when the frost set in; that is, *he had lost two hundred and forty-seven thousand men, and ninety-two thousand horses, under his immediate command, before a flake of snow fell.** It is neither, therefore, in the rigour of the elements, nor the accidents of fortune, that we are to seek the real causes of Napoleon's overthrow, but in the natural consequences of his system of conquest; in the oppressive effects of the execrable

* As this is a point of the very highest importance, involving, as it does, a decisive refutation of the assertion so often repeated, that it was the cold of

maxim, that war should maintain war ; and in the impatience of taxation and thirst for plunder, in the rapacious military republic of which he formed the head. These concurring causes, by throwing the armies they had on foot upon external spoliation for their support, at once exposed them, the moment the career of conquest was checked, to unheard-of sufferings, and excited unbounded exasperation among every people over whom their authority prevailed.

VIII. Nor is it difficult to see what were the circumstances which produced this prodigious and unprecedented consumption of life, both in men and horses, during the course of this campaign. Notwithstanding all his foresight and care in providing for his army, Napoleon had made no adequate provision for the event which actually occurred, viz. a retreat from Moscow. He had no magazines between that capital and Smolensko, a distance of nearly three hundred miles ; and accordingly it has been

CHAP.
LXXIII.
1812.

125.
And were
due to his
own want
of prudence
in the cam-
paign.

Russia which destroyed the power of Napoleon, the following details, from the Morning States in the War office at Paris, are given on the subject :—

STRENGTH ON ENTERING RUSSIA.				STRENGTH ON 4TH NOV. (3 days before the cold began.)		
	Infantry.	Cavalry.	Horses.*	Infantry.	Cavalry.	Horses.*
Imperial Guard,	41,094	6,279	16,322	14,000	2000	
1st corps, Davoust,	68,627	3,424	11,417	13,000	459	
3d do. Ney,	35,755	3,587	8,039	6,000	231	
4th do. Eugene,	42,430	2,368	10,057	12,000	181	
5th do. Poniatowski,	52,159	4,152	9,438	3,500	324	
8th do. Vandamme,	15,885	2,050	3,477	1,200	294	
1st corps cavalry, Nansouty,		12,077	13,014			
2d corps, Montbrun,		10,436	11,125			
3d do. Grouchy,		9,676	10,451			
4th do.		7,994	8,766			
General staff, Berthier,	3,075	908	1,748			
Four corps and staff united,				500	1500	
Dismounted cavalry,						
	239,025	62,951		50,200	4989	
	62,951			4,989		
Grand total of men and horses, }	301,976		103,854	55,189	4989	12,000

Thus, at Wiazma on 4th November, three days before the cold commenced, the central army, under the immediate command of Napoleon, had been reduced from 302,000 to 55,000; and its horses from 104,000 to 12,000; in other

* Including those of the artillery and baggage trains.

CHAP.
LXXIII.
1812.

¹ *Ante*, ch.
Lxxiii. § 20.

shown that General Barraguay d'Hilliers, who was intrusted with keeping open that communication, was under the necessity of stopping the convoys on their road to Moscow, in order to procure subsistence for his troops.¹ Immense stores, indeed, had been collected at Borissow, Minsk, and Wilna; but between them and Smolensko there were none: and of what avail were these great magazines in Lithuania, when the army had nearly five hundred miles to march before it could reach them, and when the forces left to garrison the towns where they were placed were so insufficient, that they all fell into the hands of the enemy as soon as they were attacked? How was it possible that any troops, even if the weather had been as fine as possible, could have carried provisions with them for so great a distance, when marching over a country of which the resources had been entirely consumed by the passage of two armies of such prodigious magnitude over it in the early part of the campaign? Nay, so far had the Emperor been from anticipating a retreat, that he had not provided any means of frosting the horses' shoes—a circumstance which was the immediate cause of the ruin of the cavalry, and the necessity of leaving so great a part of the artillery behind. Even the bridges which had been broken down in the course of the advance had not been repaired when

words, it had lost 247,000 men, and 92,000 horses, *before a flake of snow fell*; and there was only left of that immense host for the frost to act upon, 55,000 men and 12,000 horses. The following table exhibits the progressive decline of the men and horses belonging to the cavalry and artillery alone, without the baggage, before the cold began on November 7th.

	Horses of cavalry.	Men.
Crossed the Niemen with Napoleon,	85,000	301,976
He had at Smolensko,	60,000	182,000
At Borodino,	45,000	133,000
At entering Moscow,	21,000	90,000
At Wiazma, including the artillery- horses, there remained only, .	12,000	55,000

So that above 70,000 horses of the cavalry, and 245,000 men, had already perished before the frost set in. — See *Etats de la Guerre de 1812*, given in CAPEFIGUE, *Histoire de l'Empire de Napoleon*, ix. 421, 422; and *Imperial Muster-Rolls*, in CHAMBRAY, i. App. No. 2.

the troops came to them again during their retreat. It is evident, therefore, that Napoleon, spoiled by the successes of so many campaigns, had provided, so far at least as provisions go, only for an advance, and, anticipating a continued residence in the interior of Russia, had made no sufficient provision for a retreat; and to this cause, undoubtedly, great part of the unparalleled calamities in which he was involved is to be ascribed.¹

CHAP.
LXXIII.
1812.

IX. The conduct of Napoleon in lingering so long at Moscow has been generally considered as the immediate cause of the ruin of his armament; and, in a military point of view, it has been regarded as hardly admitting of defence. It appears from official documents, that, *a month before the commencement of the cold weather*—viz. on *October 6th*,—he felt the necessity of a retreat, if the Russians did not make peace; and was already giving orders for the evacuation of the hospitals, and the movement of the parks of artillery towards Mojaïsk.² On the 5th, 6th, 10th, 13th, and 15th of October, orders to that effect were issued to his marshals.³ Had the retreat commenced at that period, however, there seems no reasonable ground for supposing that its results would have been materially different from what it actually was. The approach of Tchichagoff's and Wittgenstein's armies would have rendered his projected winter-quarters at Smolensko untenable; and the army must still have fallen back to the Niemen, harassed and surrounded by the superior light troops of the enemy. The evils of famine, so severely felt on the whole road, would certainly not have been diminished if double the number of mouths had remained to be fed. If the artillery had not been disabled by the perishing of its horses from cold, it would have been as seriously impeded by the impossibility of maintaining them; and if the night bivouacs had not thinned the ranks of the French army, they would not have weakened the force of the enemy who was to assail them.

¹ Chamb. ii.
382, 395.
Claus. 91,
94.

126.
Napoleon's
long stay at
Moscow
was not
what ruined
him.

² Gour. ii.
72.

³ Ibid. ii.
72. Fain,
ii. 147.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

127.

He had
reasonable
ground for
expecting
the submis-
sion of Rus-
sia after
Moscow was
taken.

X. The French army lost one-third of its number by the march through Lithuania in summer before the bloodshed began, when the resources of the country were still untouched, and the army fresh and in high spirits; what had it to expect in a retreat for double the distance in autumn, over a country perfectly exhausted, with depressed and wearied troops, and a victorious enemy pressing its rear? On the other hand, the French Emperor had every ground for believing that the occupation of Moscow would terminate the war gloriously for his arms. He had uniformly found that the capture of a metropolis had led, sooner or later, to the subjugation of a country; and his former experience of the character of Alexander gave him no reason to believe that he would be able to resist the force of circumstances which had repeatedly brought Austria and Prussia to submission. It may reasonably be doubted, therefore, whether Napoleon would have judged wisely in commencing his retreat at an earlier period, and thereby losing at once the chance which he had, by a protracted stay in the capital, of vanquishing the firmness of the Russian government. By so doing, he would have certainly incurred the evils of a disastrous retreat, and of a general insurrection against him in Europe, and thrown away the probable chance of a submission which would, during his lifetime at least, have placed his power beyond the reach of attack.¹

¹ Claus, 253,
255. Lab.
225.

128.

The burning
of Moscow
did not oc-
casion it.

XI. The conflagration of Moscow, though a sublime example of patriotism by the Russians, cannot be considered as the cause of the ruin of the French. It may have rendered the continued residence of the army around the Kremlin unadvisable; though we have Napoleon's authority for asserting, that *after* the fire the greater part of the army were still cantoned in Moscow, amply supplied with furs, provisions, and every species of necessary, and that the neighbourhood contained two thousand houses and chateaux still in preservation. General

Mathieu Dumas, as already mentioned, says the burning of Moscow was rather an advantage than the reverse, as it sooner forced the Emperor to a retreat. But, unquestionably, if the French cavalry and light troops had preserved their ascendancy in the field, and had been able to forage successfully for the army, they might have secured ample and comfortable winter-quarters in Novgorod, Tver, or Kalouga, in one of the richest countries in the world.¹

CHAP.
LXXXIII.
1812.

¹ 22d Bull.
iv. 111. 21st
and 22d
Bull. iv.
109, 110.
36th Bull. v.
145. Dumas
Souv. ii.

XII. It follows from these considerations, that the real causes of the disasters of Napoleon were : 1st, His imprudence in advancing so far from the base of his operations, and thereby exposing himself to the hazard of having a temporary disaster converted into a lasting defeat : or, in plain language, in risking his army so far from its magazines, depots, and reinforcements. 2d, His advance to Moscow after the bloody battle of Borodino, and when his cavalry had suffered so severely as to preclude it from taking an efficient part for the remainder of the campaign. 3d, The alarming and extraordinary increase in the Russian light horse from the junction of the Cossacks of the Don, and the approximation of the seat of war to the nomad tribes of the eastern frontier of the empire, which immediately prevented the French from foraging, and threatened their vast army with destruction, from the very magnitude of its own numbers. 4th, The conducting of the retreat by separate corps, with an interval of miles between them, which enabled the Russian army, though not superior in number upon the whole to the accumulated strength of their enemies, to fall with an overwhelming force on their detached columns, and pass their long line over the sword's edge, with hardly any injury to themselves. If this method of retreating was unavoidable for the supply of the army, it only demonstrates the more clearly the imprudence of advancing such a distance, when no better method of escape was practicable,² and the strength of the feeling of

129.
Real causes,
in a military
point of
view, of the
disaster.

² Gour. ii.
92. Bout.
ii. 447.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

130.
The Russian
light horse
was the
great cause
of his ruin.

inferiority which must have existed to compel so great a captain to hazard such a retreat.

Of these causes, the most important place, in a military point of view, undoubtedly must be assigned to the immense preponderance which, when the French arrived at Moscow, was obtained by the clouds of light horse who crowded to the Russian standards from the banks of the Don, and the other nomad provinces of the empire. The more the memorable campaign of 1812 is studied, the more clearly it will appear that this was the real cause of the destruction of the French army, and that it must have proved equally fatal to them, even though Moscow had not been burned, or the frosts of winter had never set in. If a European army advances in good order, forming magazines as it goes, it may doubtless be able to withstand the utmost attacks of the Asiatic cavalry ; and it was because they took these precautions that the armies of Alexander and the Romans in ancient, and of the British and Russians in modern times, have so often prevailed over the innumerable swarms of the Eastern horse. But when an army rushes headlong into the middle of the Scythian cavalry without having the means, from resources of its own, of providing itself with subsistence and forage, it is certain to be destroyed. Alexander the Great wisely avoided such a danger, and, contenting himself with a barren victory over the Scythians on the banks of the Oxus, turned aside from their inhospitable territory. Darius, with all the forces of Persia, penetrated into it and perished. The legions of Mark Antony and Crassus sank under the incessant attacks of the Parthian horse ; the genius of Julian proved inadequate to the encounter ; the heroism of Richard Cœur-de-Lion was shattered against the innumerable squadrons of Saladin. The very multitude of the carriages with which a European army invades an Asiatic territory, proves the immediate cause of its ruin, by augmenting its encumbrances, and hastening the period

when, from being surrounded by the light horse of the enemy, it must perish from want. The enterprise of Napoleon against Russia thus proved abortive from the same cause which, in every age, has defeated the attempts of refined nations to penetrate the Eastern wilds ; and it is a striking proof of the lasting influence of general causes on the greatest of human undertakings, that the overthrow of the mightiest armament which the power of matured knowledge ever hurled against the forces of infant civilisation, was in reality owing to the same causes which in every age have given victory to the arms of the shepherd kings.

Justice also requires that due credit should be given to the Russian mode of pursuit by a parallel march : a measure which was unquestionably one of the greatest military achievements of the last age. Had Kutusoff pursued by the same road as the French, his army, moving on a line wasted by the triple curse of three previous marches, would have melted away even more rapidly than his enemy's. Had he hazarded a serious engagement before the French were completely broken by their sufferings, his own loss would probably have been so severe as to have disabled him from taking advantage of them. Despair rapidly restores the courage of an army : a disorderly crowd of stragglers often resumes the strictest military order, and is capable of the greatest efforts, when the animation of a battle is at hand. The passage of the Beresina, the battle of Corunna, the victory of Hlanau, are sufficient to demonstrate this important truth. Well knowing that a continued retreat would of itself weaken his enemies, the Russian general manœuvred in such a manner, as, with hardly any loss to himself, except what necessarily arose from cold and fatigue, to make prisoners above half their army ; and that at a time when the storms of winter were making as great ravages in his own troops as in those of his antagonists. Had he not pursued at all, Napoleon would have halted at Smo-

CHAP.
LXXIII.
1812.

131.
Extraordi-
nary ability
of Kutusoff's
conduct in
the pursuit.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

lensko, and soon repaired his disasters ; had he fought a pitched battle with him on the road, his army, already grievously weakened by the cold, would have probably been rendered incapable of pursuing him to the frontier. By acting a bolder part, he might have gained more brilliant, but he could not have secured such lasting success : he would have risked the fate of the empire, which hung on the preservation of his army : he might have acquired the title of conqueror of Napoleon, but he would not have deserved that of saviour of his country.¹

¹ Bout. ii.
450.

132.
Moral grandeur of the conduct of the Emperor and people of Russia.

But it would have been in vain that all these advantages lay within the reach of Russia, had their constancy and firmness not enabled her people to grasp them. Justice has not hitherto been done to the heroism of their conduct. We admire the Athenians, who refused to treat with Xerxes after the sack of their city, and the Romans, who sent troops to Spain after the defeat of Cannæ ; what, then, shall we say of the generals, who, while their army was yet reeking with the slaughter of Borodino, formed the project of enveloping the invader in the capital which he had conquered ? what of the citizens, who fired their palaces and their temples lest they should furnish even a temporary refuge to the invader ? and what of the sovereign, who, undismayed by the conflagration of Moscow, announced to his people, in the moment of their greatest agony, his resolution never to submit, and foretold the approaching deliverance of his country and of the world ? Time, the great sanctifier of events, has not yet lent its halo to these sacrifices ; separate interests have arisen : jealousy of Russia has come in place of dread of Napoleon ; and those who have gained most by the heroism of their allies are too much influenced by momentary considerations to acknowledge it. But when these fears and jealousies shall have passed away, and the pageant of Russian, like that of French ascendancy, shall have disappeared, the impartial voice of posterity will pro-

nounce that the history of the world does not afford an example of higher moral grandeur.

But all the heroism of Alexander, and all the devotion of the Russians, great and memorable as they were, would have failed in producing the extraordinary revolution which was effected in this campaign, if they had not been aided by the moral laws of nature, which impel guilty ambition into a boundless career of aggression, and provide a condign punishment in the vehement and universal indignation which its violence occasions. Madame de Stael has said, that Providence never appeared so near human affairs as in this memorable year; the faithful throughout Europe, struck with the awful nature of the catastrophe, repeated, with feelings of awe, the words of the Psalm: "Efflavit Deus, et dissipantur." The noble lines of Johnson written on Charles XII. seem a poetic prophecy of the far greater catastrophe of Napoleon, and may, by the alteration of a few words, be rendered precisely descriptive of his fate:—

"No joys to him pacific sceptres yield;
 War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field.
 Behold! surrounding kings their powers combine,
 And some capitulate—and some resign.
 Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain.
 'Think nothing gained,' he cries, 'till naught remain,
 On Moscow's walls till Gothic standards fly,
 And all be mine beneath the Polar sky.'
 The march begins in military state,
 And nations on his eye suspended wait;
 Stern Famine guards the solitary coast,
 And Winter barricades the realms of frost.
 He comes—not want and cold his course delay;
 Hide, blushing glory, hide the Moskwa's day:
 The vanquished hero leaves his broken bands,
 And shows his miseries in distant lands;
 Condemned a needy suppliant to wait,
 While ladies interpose and slaves debate.
 His fall was destined to a barren strand,
 A petty fortress and a sea-girt land:
 He left a name, at which the world grew pale,
 To point a moral or adorn a tale."

A recent philosophic historian has declared that, after full reflection on the overthrow of Napoleon in Russia, he

CHAP.
LXXXIII.

1812.

133.

Moral
causes to
which the
overthrow
of Napo-
leon was
owing.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

¹ Arnold's
Lectures on
History,
178.

can ascribe it to nothing but the direct and immediate interposition of Heaven.¹ Yet, while no reasonable mind will probably doubt the agency of Supreme power in this awful event, it is perhaps more consonant to our ideas of the Divine administration, and more descriptive of the established order of the universe, to behold in it the consequence of the fixed moral laws of our being, rather than any special outpouring of celestial wrath.

134.

Steps which
brought
about this
punishment.

It was the necessity of conquest to existence, which Napoleon throughout his whole career so strongly felt, and so often expressed, that was the real cause which precipitated him upon the snows of Russia; and we are not to regard the calamitous issue of the expedition as the punishment merely of his individual ambition, but as the inevitable result and just retribution of the innumerable crimes of the Revolution. The steps which brought about this consummation now stand revealed in imperishable light. The unbounded passions let loose during the first fervour of that convulsion, impelled the nation, when the French throne was overturned, into the career of foreign conquest; the armed multitude would not submit to the cost which their armies required; the maxim that war must maintain war, flowed from the impatience of taxation in the Parisian, as it had done in the Roman people; and the system was of necessity adopted of precipitating armies, without magazines or any other resources except warlike equipments, to seek for subsistence and victory in the heart of the enemy's territory. Thence the forced requisitions, the scourging contributions, the wasting of nations, the famishing of armies, the exasperation of mankind. Nothing was wanting, in the end, but the constancy to resist the vehemence of the onset; for the spirit of universal hostility was roused: and this was found in the tenacity of Wellington at Torres Vedras, and the heroism of Alexander in Russia. The faithful trembled and sank in silence, and almost doubted, in the

long-continued triumph of wickedness, the reality of the Divine administration of the universe ; but the laws of Providence were incessantly acting, and preparing in silence the renovation of the world.

CHAP.
LXXIII.

1812.

"Sæpe mihi dubiam traxit sententia mentem,
Curarent Superi terras, an nullus inesset
Rector, et incerto fluerent mortalia casu.

Abstulit hunc tandem Rufini pœna tumultum,
Absolvitque Deos. Jam non ad culmina rerum
Injustos crevisse queror ; tolluntur in altum,
Ut lapsu graviore ruant."

CHAPTER LXXIV.

RESURRECTION OF GERMANY.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

I.

Immense
sensation
produced
in Europe
by the Mos-
cow cam-
paign.

FUTURE generations of men, living under the shadow of their own fig-trees, engrossed in the arts of peace, and far removed from the excitements and miseries of war, will hardly be able to credit the contemporary accounts of the sensation produced in Europe by the result of the Moscow campaign. The calamity was too great to be concealed ; the blow too dreadful not to resound throughout the world. Napoleon himself, enamoured of powerful impressions, and strongly excited by the awful nature of the disaster he had sustained, revealed its magnitude in his twenty-ninth bulletin in its full proportions. His subsequent arrival in Paris demonstrated to the world that he regarded the army as virtually destroyed, and that all his hopes were centred in the new host which he was about to collect in the French empire. The broken bands and woful crowds which, bereft of everything, in tattered garb, and with haggard visages, traversed the Prussian territory, rather like ghosts or suppliants than armed enemies, gave confirmation strong of the extent of the calamity. A universal thrill was felt over all Europe at this awful catastrophe, which, commencing with the flames of Moscow, and terminating with the waves of the Beresina, seemed to have been sent to break, by a special messenger of the Almighty, the arm of the oppressor, and strike off the fetters of a captive world.

In England, especially, the sense of deliverance gave rise to unbounded transports. The anxieties, the burdens, the calamities, of twenty years' warfare were forgotten; and even the least sanguine ceased to despair in a cause in which Providence itself appeared to have at length declared against the aggressor; and the magnitude of the disaster he had sustained was such, that it seemed to be beyond the power of human exertion to repair.

But if these were the feelings with which those inhabitants of Europe who had known the war only by its excitements and its burdens regarded this portentous event, what must have been the feelings with which it was regarded in Prussia and the north of Germany? In Prussia, yet prostrated by the thunderbolt of Jena, and groaning under six years of subsequent bondage—which mourned its dead queen, its lost honour, its halved territory; which, as the last degradation in the cup of the vanquished, had been compelled to wear the colours and serve in the ranks of the oppressor, and strive to rivet on others the same chain by which itself was enthralled; and which had learned the terrible meaning conveyed in the words of the ancient annalist—"subjectos tanquam suos, viles tanquam alienos;"*—in Germany, in which every noble heart and every intrepid arm had been long enrolled in the secret bands of the Tugendbund, and where nothing was wanting but a leader and a royal standard, to occasion a general and irresistible outbreak against French oppression? Ever since the abortive attempt at liberation in 1809, the severity of the imperial rule had been materially increased in the states of Northern Germany. Mutual distrust prevailed. The French authorities, aware of the profound hatred with which they were universally regarded, sought, by additional acts of cruelty, to strike terror into the vanquished.¹ The Germans, seeing no end to their miseries, sought refuge in deeper and

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

2.
Unbounded
transports
in Prussia
and North-
ern Ger-
many.

¹ Capefigue,
Hist. de
l'Empire,
viii. 248,
249. Haid.
vii. 12, 15.

* "Subjected like his own: held worthless as strangers.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

3.
Cruelties to
those en-
gaged in
Schill's con-
spiracy.

more wide-spread conspiracy, and submitted to present suffering in the anticipation of approaching vengeance.

Atrocious acts of cruelty had added a yet deeper hue to the general feelings of execration with which the government of Napoleon was regarded, from the never-ending weight of the military contributions. Twenty citizens of Vienna had been shot to repress the general effervescence, before the French armies evacuated that capital in 1809 ; and eleven officers of Schill's corps, all belonging to the first families at Berlin, had been executed for their adherence to his cause. They died, after embracing each other, singing patriotic hymns. But their fate, deplorable as it was, soon became an object of envy to their companions in that heroic enterprise whose lives had been spared. All the volunteers in the Queen's regiment, the noblest youths in Prussia, were conducted, with a chain about their necks, to the great depot of galley-slaves at Cherbourg, and there employed in hard labour in the convict dress, with a four-and-twenty pound bullet fastened to the ankles of each, amidst the common malefactors, without being permitted any communication with their parents, or their even knowing whether they were dead or alive. The eleven noble Prussians, thus unworthily sacrificed to the jealous apprehensions of Napoleon, were in the first instance brought to Verdun as prisoners of war, but from thence they were speedily conducted to Wesel, where they were delivered over to a military commission, and sentenced to be shot. The judgment was pronounced at noon ; before six in the morning their graves had been dug in the fosses of the citadel. When the executioners were about to bind one of the victims named Widelle to his brother, he exclaimed, " Are we not already sufficiently bound by blood, and the cause in which we are engaged, to be spared this last act of insult ?" ¹ *

¹ Capef.
Hist. de
l'Empire,
viii. 248,
249. Hard.
Report,
March 16,
1813. Fain,
ii. 246.

* *Défense des Officiers de la Troupe de Schill. Par M. J. N. PERWEZ, leur défenseur, Liège, 1814, p. 29.*

The pecuniary exactions which had been drawn from Prussia, and the requisitions in kind, which had been extracted from its unhappy inhabitants during the last year, would exceed belief, if they were not attested by contemporary and authentic documents. From these it appears that no less than four hundred and eighty-two thousand men and eighty thousand horses had traversed Prussia in its whole extent, in the first six months of 1812, and that more than one-half of this immense force had been quartered for above three months in its unhappy provinces. By the convention of 24th February 1812, the furnishings made for its support were to be taken in part payment of the arrears, still amounting to nearly a hundred millions of francs, which remained unpaid of the great military contribution of 640,000,000 francs, (£25,000,000) levied on Prussia after the battle of Jena.¹ But though the French authorities, with merciless rapacity, enforced the new requisitions, they never could be brought to state them, in terms of the treaty, as a deduction from the old ones. The French host, like a cloud of locusts, passed over the country, devouring its whole subsistence, plundering its inhabitants, and wrenching from them, by the terrors of military execution, the whole cattle, horses, and carriages in their possession. The number of the former carried off, before September in the single year 1812, in East Prussia alone, amounted to twenty-two thousand seven hundred; that of the cattle to seventy thousand, while the carts seized were thirteen thousand three hundred and forty-nine. The weekly cost of Junot's corps of seventy thousand men, quartered in Lower Silesia, was two hundred thousand crowns, or £50,000, and that of all the rest of the army in the same proportion. These enormous contributions were exclusive of the furnishings stipulated to be provided by the state, by the treaty of February 24, 1812, which were also rigidly exacted;²* and of the arrears of the great

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

4.

Enormous
pecuniary
exactions
levied by
the French
in Prussia.

¹ *Ante*, ch.
xlvi. § 77.

² *Exposé de
la Conduite
du Gouv.
Fran. envers
la Prusse,
Schoell,
Recueil, ii.
277, 279.*

* These furnishings were as follows:—200,000 quintals of rye; 24,000 of rice;

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

5.

Great im-
pression
which the
Moscow
campaign
produced
in Prussia.
Dec. 22,
1812.

contribution of 1806, the collection of which had become, by the total exhaustion of the country, altogether hopeless.

So early as the 20th December, the magnitude of the disasters which the grand army had sustained was known at Berlin; and the King, apprehensive for the fate of his troops in the general ruin, had sent full powers to General York, their commander, to act according to circumstances. Meanwhile the agitation in the capital daily became more violent. Every successive arrival from the army brought fresh accounts of the accumulated disasters it had undergone; and at length the appearance of the wo-stricken fugitives who entered, the precursors of the corpse-like mutilated bands who followed, left no doubt that an extraordinary catastrophe had occurred.* Augereau, who commanded there, was so much alarmed by the sinister reports which these scattered fugitives diffused among the inhabitants both of the metropolis and its garrison, that he wrote to the Emperor that it would be expedient, in order to be able at once to stifle any insurrectionary movement, to establish a powerful cordon of troops in the principal towns on the Oder. In the midst of the general agitation, however, Frederick William and his able minister Hardenberg continued perfectly tranquil; and both Augereau and the French ambassador Saint Marsan wrote to the Emperor,¹ that

¹ Augereau to Berthier, Dec. 22, 1812, and St Marsan to Napoleon, Jan. 4 and 12, 1812. Hard. xiii. 12, 13.

48,000 of dried vegetables; 200,000 bottles of brandy; 2,000,000 of beer; 400,000 quintals of wheat; 650,000 of hay; 750,000 of straw; 6,000,000 pecks of oats; 44,000 oxen; 15,000 cavalry horses; 6000 quintals of powder; 3000 of lead; 3600 waggons harnessed, with drivers; hospital and field equipage for 20,000 sick.—See SCHOELL, ii. 279.

* “On Sunday forenoon last I went to one of the gates, and found a crowd collected round a car, in which some wounded soldiers had just returned from Russia. No grenade or grape could have so disfigured them as I beheld them, the victims of the cold. One of them had lost the upper joints of all his ten fingers, and he showed us the stumps; another looked as if he had been in the hands of the Turks—he wanted both ears and nose. More horrible was the look of a third, whose eyes had been frozen: the eyelids hung down rotting, the globes of the eyes were burst, and protruding from their sockets. It was awfully hideous; but a spectacle more horrible still was to present itself. Out of the straw in the bottom of the car I now beheld a figure creep painfully,

they had no reason to complain of their conduct, and that the cabinet of Berlin would remain firm to the French alliance. But the stream of events was soon too violent to be withstood, and Prussia was impelled into the career of honour and danger, despite the prudent caution of its court, by one of those circumstances which defeat all the calculations of human wisdom.

CHAP.
LXXIV.
1813.

It has been already noticed,¹ that when the retreat and overthrow of the grand army uncovered the right flank of Marshal Macdonald's corps, who was engaged in the blockade of Riga, he began his retreat towards the Niemen, closely followed by the Russians under General Diebitch, who harassed his flank and rear in the most distressing manner. After marching several days in this manner, the Russian general, by a skilful manœuvre, interposed a small body of troops between the Prussians and the remainder of Macdonald's corps, and immediately sent a flag of truce to inform the commander of the former, York, that he was entirely cut off, and proposing to enter into a convention for the safety of his corps. York, deeming it his first duty to secure in the general wreck the Prussian corps under his command, entered into secret negotiations with Diebitch, in order to secure the unmolested retreat and safety of these auxiliary forces; which in the end led to the most important results.

6.
Convention
of General
York.
¹ *Ante*, ch.
lxxiii. §
103.

which one could scarcely believe to be a human being, so wild and distorted were the features; the lips were rotted away, the teeth stood exposed. He pulled the cloth from before his mouth, and grinned on us like a death's head: then he burst out into a wild laughter, gave the word of command in broken French, with a voice more like the bark of a dog than anything human, and we saw that the poor wretch was mad—mad from a frozen brain! Suddenly a cry was heard, 'Henry! my Henry!' and a young girl rushed up to the car. The poor lunatic rubbed his brow at the voice, as if trying to recollect where he was; then he stretched out his arms towards the distracted girl, and lifted himself up with his whole strength. But it was too much for his exhausted frame; a shuddering fever-fit came over him, and he sank lifeless on the straw. Such are the dragon teeth of wo which the Corsican Cadmus has sown."—FORSTER to KÖRNER, *January 14, 1813*; *Erinnerungen aus dem Befreiungskriege in briefen gesammelt, von FRIEDRICH FORSTER—Stuttgart, 1840.*

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

7.

Character of
York.

General York, who was thus driven as it were to take a step of very doubtful public morality, had it not been forced upon him in a manner by absolute necessity, was a man of fifty years of age, distinguished for bravery and military talent. A Prussian by birth, he had served in youth in the Dutch colonies, had seen much of the world, and made good use of his means of observation. Like many men of a similar turn of mind, he concealed beneath a cold and reserved exterior an ardent mind, a lofty ambition, and a strength of character which never was surpassed. He had none of the amenities of life in his composition, had few friends, was passionate in his temper, and lived in the recesses of an aspiring and capacious soul. Conscious of great natural abilities, he was devoured by the thirst of fame, and ardently devoted to the interests of his country—a peculiarity which early secured the esteem of Scharnhorst, who was well aware of his capacity as a general. When the Russian war broke out, Napoleon suggested the appointment of Grawert to the command of the Prussian auxiliaries—a respectable veteran, but old in years and feeble. The King, by the secret advice of Scharnhorst, who, though retired from office, had still considerable weight in the war-office, acquiesced in the suggestion, but appointed York as attached to Grawert's corps, with the rank of lieutenant-general. Before six weeks had expired, Grawert became so feeble that he was obliged to give up the command to York, who was thus brought forward with full power at this momentous crisis of his country and of Europe.¹

¹ Clans.
225, 226.

8.
Meeting
between
him and
Diebitch.

At the first meeting between Diebitch and York on the evening of the 25th December, the former represented that he had placed his troops in such a manner, that though he did not expect absolutely to cut off his retreat, yet he would make himself master of his artillery-train, baggage, and waggons. He informed him of the total destruction of the French army, and that the Russian generals had instructions from their Emperor to avoid

treating the Prussians as decided enemies, and, if possible, to promote such an accommodation as might be agreeable to them, and lead to the re-establishment of the former friendly relations between the two countries. York made no decisive declaration in reply, but testified a wish to come to an accommodation, if it could be done without leaving a stain on the honour of his arms. It was at length agreed that hostilities for that night should be suspended, and that a Prussian officer in Diebitch's corps should be sent to York's headquarters. The choice fell on General Clausewitz, who has left a most interesting account of the negotiation. By his advice, however, Diebitch took every imaginable precaution during the night, as if the most determined enemy were at hand.¹

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

¹ Claus.
231, 233.

York remained for some days, as well he might, undecided; military honour impelling one way, and patriotic love another. In fact, it was only after repeated conferences, and finding himself so much implicated by his slow progress and repeated parleys, that he was at length brought to a decision. He was chiefly doubtful whether the Russians were in sufficient force to justify, in a military point of view, the defection which he contemplated; but being at length satisfied on this point, from a letter which Clausewitz brought him from the Russian headquarters, he said to the latter, "Do you pledge your honour that what General d'Auveray says in his letter is true, that Wittgenstein's troops will really be at the points he mentions on the 31st?" Clausewitz having pledged his word accordingly, he mused for a few minutes, and then, holding out his hand to Clausewitz, said, "You have me. Tell General Diebitch that we must confer early to-morrow, at the mill of Potscherau, and that I am now firmly resolved to separate myself from the French and their cause. But I will not do the thing by halves; I will get you Massenbach also." Then calling an officer of Massenbach's cavalry, he said, walking quickly up and down the room, "What say your regi-

9.
York is at
length de-
cided.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

ments?" The officer broke out with enthusiasm on the delight the whole army would feel at being rid of the French alliance, and permitted to draw their swords for the real interests of their country! "Bravo!" cried York, smiling: "You young ones may talk, but my older head is shaking on my shoulders!" Such were the particulars of one of the most important conferences that ever took place in modern Europe; for, beyond all question, the resolution then taken by York was the chief cause of Napoleon's overthrow.¹

¹ Claus.
238, 246.

10.
Convention
of Potsche-
rau, and
York's
views on it.
Dec. 30,
1812.

The final conference took place at the mill of Potscherau, and a convention was there concluded between the two commanders, on the 30th December 1812. By this memorable instrument it was stipulated that the Prussian troops should remain for two months in a state of neutrality, even in the event of the government directing them to resume operations with the French armies; and that, if the convention was not ratified by the Emperor of Russia or the King of Prussia, the Prussian corps was to be at liberty to follow the destination which might be assigned to it. On the other hand, the Russian commander agreed to restore to the Prussian general all his stragglers, and the whole cannon and materiel of every kind which might fall into his hands. This convention, which was justified in General York's letter to Marshal Macdonald on the ground of the critical situation of his forces, which left him no alternative but to "lose the greater part of his troops, and the whole materiel and provisions of the army, or to conclude a convention which might save them both," was in reality founded on ulterior and more important views. Of their existence York betrayed a secret consciousness; and it was plain that he was aware he was throwing either for the crown of a patriot or the scaffold of a traitor, when he used the expression, in his letter announcing the convention to Marshal Macdonald,—
"Whatever judgment the world may pass on my conduct gives me little uneasiness. My duty towards my

troops, and the most mature reflection, have dictated this step ; motives the most pure, whatever appearances may be, have alone guided me." What these motives were was revealed in the following passage of York's despatch to the King of Prussia announcing the event, which was suppressed in the copy furnished to the French ambassador :—"Now or never is the time for your majesty to extricate yourself from the thralldom of an ally whose intentions in regard to Prussia are veiled in impenetrable darkness, and justify the most serious alarm. That consideration has guided me : God grant it may be for the salvation of the country !" ¹

CHAP.
LXXIV.
1813.

¹ Convention, Dec. 30, 1812. York to Macdonald, Dec. 30. Fain, ii. 202, 203. Hard. xi. 459, 460. Claus. 239, 240.

General Diebitch, who arranged this important convention on the part of the Russians, is the same who has since become so well known from having been the first Russian general who crossed the Balkan, and planted the victorious Russian standards on the domes of Adrianople. His conduct in this transaction was most praiseworthy ; at once able and honourable, reposing as much confidence in York as his heavy responsibility would allow him, and displaying throughout an unprejudiced, frank, and noble bearing. Rejecting all appearance of superiority in arms, and all the pride of victory, he seemed to feel only for his gallant opponent, placed in the most difficult and trying situation in which an officer could be situated—that of choosing between the unanimous call of his country, and probably the only means of saving it, on the one hand, and the engagements contracted by his sovereign, under circumstances where he could hardly be said to be a free agent, on the other. ²*

11.
Character and conduct of Diebitch in this affair.

² Claus. 244.

* Jean Charles Diebitch, afterwards called Sabalkanski, or "Subduer of the Balkan," was born on the 13th May 1785, at Grossliepe, in Silesia. His father belonged to an ancient and noble family, and had served as aide-de-camp to Prince Henry of Prussia, and subsequently to the Great Frederick, during the Seven Years' War ; and after the death of that prince he entered the Russian service. Young Diebitch, from his earliest years, evinced a decided turn for military affairs. He was entered in 1797, at the age of twelve years, in the corps of cadets at Berlin ; and in 1799, at the desire of the Emperor Paul, received a commission as ensign in the Russian regiment of grenadiers of the

Biography of Diebitch.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

12.

Extreme
embarrass-
ment of the
King, and
his dis-
avowal of
the conven-
tion.

Never was a monarch more embarrassed by a step on the part of a lieutenant than the King of Prussia was on this occasion. His first words were—"Here is enough to give one a stroke of apoplexy!" It was not merely the extreme hazard and incalculable consequences of the event which occasioned the difficulty; in the breast of Frederick William a tempest of contending emotions and opposite considerations instantly arose, almost sufficient to overturn the strongest head. Deeply impressed with the sanctity of his existing treaties with France, and feeling, as every man of honour would, that the obligation to maintain them inviolate was only rendered the more stringent by the disasters which had overwhelmed the imperial armies; he yet could not forget the cruel indignities to which he had been subjected, his insulted queen, his halved territory, his oppressed people. He clearly saw, too, that the agitation in his dominions was such, that it was not improbable that the people would ere long take the matter into their own hands, and, whatever the government might do, join the Russians as soon as they advanced into the Prussian territory. In this dilemma the King remained, though with a heavy heart, faithful to his honour and the French alliance. Orders were immediately despatched to supersede General York in his command, which was conferred on General Kleist: the former was ordered to be arrested and sent to Berlin to stand his trial,

Jan. 5.
1813.

Guard. In 1805, he made his first essay in arms at Austerlitz, where he was wounded in the right hand, but, without leaving his post, he took his sword in his left hand; a piece of gallantry for which he was rewarded by the Emperor Alexander with a sabre of honour. Subsequently he distinguished himself at the battles of Eylau and Friedland; on the last of which occasions he was promoted to the rank of captain, and decorated with the order of St George. During the years of peace with France which followed, he devoted himself assiduously to the study of the art of strategy, and his great acquisitions being generally known, he was, when the war broke out, attached to Wittgenstein's corps as lieutenant-colonel on the staff, and signalised himself on several occasions before the memorable conference in which he took a leading part. His disposition was generous in the extreme, as may be judged by the following circumstance. During the negotiations with York, Diebitch despatched an important letter from General D'Auveray, containing matter which compromised York, and intelligence was received that the party of Cossacks who were

while the latter was directed to conduct the Prussian contingent as rapidly as possible to the headquarters of the grand army. Meanwhile Hardenberg, desirous of turning to a good account the present extraordinary crisis, and to regain for Prussia some part of its ancient splendour in return for its fidelity to its engagements, submitted to the French ambassador at Berlin, with the approbation of the King, a proposal for a still closer union between the two states, to be consolidated by the marriage of the Prince-Royal of Prussia with a princess of the family of Napoleon, and to raise the Prussian contingent in the Emperor's service to sixty thousand men.¹

CHAP.
LXXIV.
1813.

Jan. 12.
1 St Marsan
to Duc de
Bassano,
Jan. 5 and
12, 1813.
Fain, i. 207,
212. Hard.
xii. 13, 14.

There can be no doubt that these proposals on the part of the Prussian cabinet at this period were sincere; and accordingly there appeared, a few days after, a proclamation in the Berlin Gazette formally condemning York's convention, and ordering him to be delivered over to a council of war. In truth, the court were still dazzled by the lustre of the Emperor's power: they conceived that Austria, restrained by the marriage of Marie Louise, would remain firm in the French alliance, and that France, far from being overthrown, would soon rise more powerful than ever.* It was the pecuniary exactions of France which really broke up the alliance with Prussia.

13.
Progress of
events in
Prussia.

intrusted with it had been taken by the French. Diebitch, in the utmost tribulation at the danger to which York was exposed, entreated Clausewitz to set off instantly to York, to confess what had occurred. Clausewitz agreed, and the sledge to convey him was at the door, when the Cossack officer entered the room, and informed Diebitch that he had been attacked, and his people dispersed. "And the letter?" said Diebitch eagerly. "It is here," replied the Cossack, taking it calmly out of his bosom. Diebitch fell on the neck of Clausewitz, and wept.—See *Biographie Universelle*, lxii. 470, 471.—*Supplément* (DIEBITCH); and CLAUSEWITZ's *Campagne de 1812*, 245.

* "The King of Prussia at this time was far from regarding France as overthrown: he believed, in spite of secret assurances to the contrary, that Austria would remain firm in the French alliance. He resisted only any further pecuniary sacrifices, which had become impracticable; but promised, if he got money, to raise 50,000 or 60,000 men for the service of the Emperor, announcing at the same time, that if his country became the seat of an insurrection, it would speedily extend to all Germany."—HARDENBERG, xii. 13, 14.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

Jan. 13.

¹ Hard. xii.
14, 15. Pro-
clamation
of Jan. 19,
1813. Fain,
i. 217.

If Napoleon would have spared that last and most galling of all humiliations, payments of money, he would never have lost the support of Frederick William. Napoleon, however, very naturally recollecting the injuries which Prussia had received at his hand, and supposing that the protestations on the King's part were entirely hypocritical, and that the convention had been concluded agreeably to his secret instructions, did not accede to these propositions. Regarding the die as already cast, immediately on the receipt of the intelligence of York's defection, he ordered a great levy of three hundred and fifty thousand men, to be immediately mentioned; and meanwhile the march of events in Prussia was so rapid as to defeat all human calculation, and whirl the government, willing or unwilling, into the dangers or glories of war.¹

14.

Measures of
York to
gain time.

York, whose firmness of character was equal to the hazardous part which he had to play, while his prudence was adequate to its delicacy, had no sooner received a copy of the Prussian Gazette of the 19th, containing the King's formal disavowal of the convention, and his own dismissal from the command, than he published a counter-proclamation, in which he declared that the aide-de-camp, Natzmer, who was said in the Gazette to have been sent with these orders to Kleist, with directions himself to enforce them, had not arrived either at the headquarters of that general nor at his own; and that as he could not recognise the authenticity of a printed gazette, he would continue his command till formally superseded. In this resolution he was unanimously supported by his troops, who remained inactive under his orders within the Russian lines. Meanwhile the non-appearance of the aide-de-camp with the formal order made it probable that the King was now at length preparing to take a decided part, and that the defection of York would possibly become the prelude to an abandonment by the cabinet of Berlin of the French alliance.²

² York's
declaration,
Jan. 27,
1813. Fain,
i. 219.

In truth, such had been the magnitude of the French

overthrow, and the rapidity with which the Russians had advanced in their pursuit, that the north-east of Germany was almost denuded of their troops, and, amidst the exulting shouts of the inhabitants, the Russian advanced guards were already appearing amongst them. Such had been the havoc which had been made in the French array, that out of above six hundred thousand combatants, who, from first to last, had entered the Russian territory with the grand army, only forty-two thousand had re-crossed the Niemen, of whom not nineteen thousand were native French.* Murat, whom the Emperor had left in command of the army, led back those shattered bands through Lithuania to Königsberg and Dantzic; while Schwartz-

CHAP.
LXXIV.
1813.
15.
Retreat
of the
French
army
through
Lithuania
and Prus-
sia.

* The details of the survivors of the wreck of the grand army, as given by the *Prussian* military authorities, are very interesting, and afford an entire confirmation of the details as to the magnitude of the disaster already given (*ante*, Chap. LXXIII. § 115) from the Russians. They are as follows:—

Troops which entered from first to last, vide <i>Ante</i> , Appendix A, Chap. LXXI.	647,158
Deduct Schwartzberg's corps	34,148
— Macdonald's ditto	32,497
	<hr/> 66,645
Grand army of Napoleon, properly so called	580,513

RE-CROSSED THE NIEMEN.

1. *French.*

Imperial Guard	800
Remains of the Moscow army	9,000
Grandjean's division	5,000
Durutte's ditto	3,000
Franzisko's ditto	1,000
Total French	<hr/> 18,800

2. *Allies.*

Saxons	6,000
Bavarians, including 3,000 in Thorn	7,000
Westphalians	1,900
Württembergers	1,000
Baden and Hessians	1,500
Poles, exclusive of the garrisons of Zamosc and Modlin	6,000
	<hr/> 23,400

Total who escaped	42,000	42,000
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Lost in the Moscow campaign	538,313
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—See SCHOELL, x. 179; and PLOTHO, *Camp. de* 1813 and 1814, ii. 437; and FAIN, i. 64.

CHAP.
LXXIV.1813.
Dec. 12.Dec. 15.
Dec. 30.
1 Schoell, x.
183, 184.
Jom. iv.
220, 221.
Fain, i.
63, 64.16.
Continued
retreat to
the Oder,
and advance
of the Rus-
sians.Atlas,
Plate 29.

Jan. 15.

berg retired by a diverging line to Pultusk, in order to regain the Austrian frontiers; so that, both by position and subsequent policy, the two imperial hosts were irrevocably separated from each other. Wittgenstein, with the advanced guard of his corps, crossed the Niemen, and entered the Prussian territory in the middle of December; and it was his advance—while cutting off the communication between Macdonald's corps, which was blockading Riga, and the remains of the grand army, retiring towards Dantzic—that rendered necessary the retreat of the former, and gave rise to the convention with York already mentioned, which led to such important results.¹

The French generals were at first hopeful that they would succeed in maintaining the line of the Vistula. But the defection of the Prussians, and the just apprehensions which that occasioned as to their communications with France, joined to the exhausted and demoralised state of the troops, soon rendered it apparent that this was impossible. In truth, the activity of Wittgenstein gave them no leisure for preparation. On the 15th of January his vanguard crossed the Vistula, spreading everywhere, as he advanced, proclamations calling upon the inhabitants to take up arms, and join in the great work of liberating the world from the thralldom of the oppressor.* Wittgenstein's troops marched in two columns, the one by Königsberg and Elbing on Berlin, the other by Tilsit and Friedland on the same capital. Pillau, with a garrison of twelve hundred men, capitulated early in February, and they con-

* "The Russian warriors have avenged the infamous invasion of their territory: they have annihilated the enemy who inundated it; and they are now engaged in pursuing the scattered remains of that immense army, which has been sacrificed to the insatiable thirst for conquest which characterised the tyrant. Worthy neighbours, we cross your frontiers solely in order to pursue the flying remains of the common foe—the enemy of the human race. We have no other object but to conquer a desirable and honourable peace. We do not enter your territories as enemies, but as friends. Property shall be sacred, and the most exact discipline preserved."—WITTGENSTEIN'S *Proclamation*, Jan. 13, 1813; SCHOELL, *Recueil*, i. p. 11, 12.

tinued their march without opposition, everywhere received with enthusiasm as deliverers, through Old Prussia. The second column, composed of Platoff's Cossacks and some light cavalry, moved straight on Dantzic, where it arrived on the 24th January, and immediately commenced the blockade of that important fortress. The third, under the orders of Tchichagoff, advanced through East Prussia, and arrived in the middle of January at Marienburg. The fourth, led by Tormasoff, was with the headquarters of the Emperor Alexander, and the commander-in-chief Kutusoff, recently and worthily invested with the title of Prince Kutusoff Smolensko: it arrived at Plonzk early in February, having advanced from Wilna through Lithuania. The fifth, under the direction of Milaradowich, Sacken, and Doctoroff, kept a diverging line to the southward, moving by Grodno on Jalowke, following the footsteps of Reynier and Poniatowski, who retired towards the Upper Vistula: while Schwartzenberg, unable to contend against such an inundation of hostile forces, concluded a separate convention, in virtue of which Reynier was allowed to retire towards Saxony, and the Austrians, in like manner, were permitted to withdraw without disturbance into Gallicia. The whole force of these five columns comprised originally a hundred and ten thousand men; but such was the reduction of numbers in the Russian main army, from the ravages which fatigue and the severity of the weather had made in their ranks, that not more than thirty-five thousand men could be assembled round the headquarters of the Emperor Alexander, which arrived at Kalisch in the end of February, and remained there till the beginning of April.¹

It would have been a difficult matter even for Moreau or Turenne, at the head of the mutilated and discouraged remains of the French army, to have maintained their ground on the Vistula against a victorious though grievously reduced body of enemies, advancing over an

CHAP.
LXXIV.
1813.

Feb. 7.

Jan. 24.

Jan. 15.

Feb. 5.

Jan. 17.

Feb. 24.
1. Jom. iv.
223, 224.
Schoell. x.
185, 187.
Fain, i. 64,
67.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

17.

Retreat and
abandon-
ment of
the army
by Murat.

Jan. 16.

Jan. 17.

extended line of above two hundred miles in breadth. But Murat was totally inadequate to the task. Staunch as his own sword in the field, and gifted with the eagle eye which could seize with advantage the most favourable direction for a charge of horse, he was utterly destitute of the moral courage, extensive combination, and enduring patience requisite for a general-in-chief intrusted with an important command. Disaster succeeded disaster during the brief period of his direction. The advanced guard of Wittgenstein surprised Marienwerder near the Vistula on the 16th January, where Prince Eugene had his headquarters; and with such success, that the Prince only succeeded in cutting his way through by desperate efforts, and with the loss of six hundred killed and wounded, and a thousand prisoners. The line of the Vistula, thus broken, and menaced by the doubtful temper of the Prussian people in rear, could no longer be maintained. Six thousand men were hastily thrown into Thorn, eight thousand into Modlin, and four thousand into Zamosc; while a motley group of stragglers, hardly a half of whom were in a condition to bear arms, but nearly twenty thousand in number, crowded into Dantzie, where they sought refuge behind its formidable ramparts, and were brought into some sort of order under the stern rule of its governor, Rapp. Meanwhile Murat, who had retired to Posen, more than a hundred miles in the rear, despairing of the salvation of the army, and conceiving the time was come, when every one, in the wreck of the Emperor's fortunes, should look to his own interest, suddenly threw up his command, and set out by post for his own dominions, in the south of Italy. Napoleon justly stigmatised this desertion of his post by the commander-in-chief at such a crisis as a decisive indication of his want of moral resolution,* and gratitude

* "The king, your husband, abandoned the army on the 16th. He is a very brave man on the field of battle; but he is weaker than a woman or a monk when he does not see the enemy. He has no moral courage."—NAPOLEON to his sister CAROLINE, *Queen of Naples*, 24th January 1813; FAIN, i. 65.

to his benefactor. "I suppose," said he in a letter to Murat, "that you are among the number of those who think that the lion is dead; if so, you will find that you are mistaken. You have done me all the mischief in your power since my departure from Wilna; your elevation to the throne has turned your head. If you wish to preserve it, conduct yourself properly."¹

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.
1 Napoleon
to Murat,
Jan. 26,
1813. Fain,
i. 65, 66.
Hard. xii.
80. Thib.
ix. 195.

Eugene, upon whom the command was thus reluctantly forced at this perilous crisis, did all that coolness and resolution could suggest to stem the torrent of disaster. His first care was to fix the headquarters at Posen, and keep them there for three weeks, in order to give an opportunity to the stragglers to come in, and communicate a certain degree of order to the retreat, which was daily more rapidly turning into a flight. But the mischief already done by the dislocation of the army was irreparable, and the forces under his command, after the loss of those left in garrison on the Vistula, were so inconsiderable, hardly amounting to fifteen thousand men, that he was in the end compelled to fall back to the Oder. Nor did the garrisons left on the Vistula effect in any degree the desired object of retarding the enemy: notwithstanding the number of men, little short of thirty thousand, who were under Rapp's command in Dantzic, such was the misery and destitution of their condition, that he was unable to attempt any external operations to arrest the foe. Thorn and Modlin were merely blockaded by the Russian reserves under Barclay de Tolly. A sufficient number were assembled before Dantzic to keep its garrison in check.²

18.
Able mea-
sures of
Eugene to
arrest the
evil.

Feb. 12.

² Fain, i.
70, 71. Jom.
iv. 223.
Schoell, x.
186.

Warsaw was, early in February, evacuated by the Austrians, who retired from the whole grand-duchy of Lithuania, which was immediately occupied by the Russians; while the main body of their force still pressed on with unconquerable vigour, though in the depth of winter, towards the Oder. Winzingerode, with a large detachment of Russian horse, soon after overtook Reynier and

19.
Retreat of
the Aus-
trians from
Poland.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.
Feb. 13.

Feb. 12.

Feb. 18.
1 Pain, i.
70, 72.
Schoell, x.
186, 187.
Jom. iv.
223, 225.

20.
The Rus-
sians pass
the Oder:
the French
evacuate
Berlin, and
retire across
the Elbe.

March 2.

his Saxon infantry at Kalisch. A sharp conflict ensued, which terminated in the overthrow of the Saxon foot, who were irrevocably separated from their horse, the former being driven back in the direction of Glogau on the Oder, while the latter were forced to an eccentric retreat by the fort of Czenstochau towards the southern parts of Poland, where they sought protection under the shelter of the retiring Austrian columns. Eugene, perceiving from these disasters that he could no longer maintain his position at Posen, broke up from thence on the 12th, having, by his resolute stand there, restored a certain degree of order to his troops, and gained time for the first columns from France and Italy to arrive on the Elbe and the Oder. On the latter stream, where he arrived on the 18th, he met the corps of General Grenier, fifteen thousand strong, which had come up from Italy. This reinforcement raised Eugene's forces to thirty thousand infantry, besides a thousand horse; and with this respectable body he hoped, with the aid of the strong line of fortresses on its banks, which were still in the hands of the French, to be able to make head against the Russians until the arrival of the great reinforcements which Napoleon was raising in France.¹

The line of the Oder, however, notwithstanding all these advantages, proved as little capable of being made good as that of the Vistula had been. Early in March the advanced guard of Wittgenstein's column, under the command of Prince Repnin, passed that river at Zellin, between Stettin and Cüstrin; while Winzingerode at the same time crossed it near Glogau. It was no longer possible either to maintain the line of the Oder, thus pierced through in all directions, or to retain possession of Berlin, now in an alarming state of fermentation. Eugene accordingly evacuated that capital on the night of the 2d March, and, after throwing three thousand men into the strong fortress of Spandau, in its vicinity, withdrew with all his forces in the direction of Wittenberg,

and cantoned them behind the Elbe. Supported by the strong fortresses of Torgau, Magdeburg, Wittenberg, as well as the intrenched camp of Pirna, so famous in the Seven Years' War, and the feebleness of the ramparts of Dresden, it was hoped they might at length make a stand, the more especially as the Russians necessarily left behind a number of men during their rapid advance; and not more than twenty thousand of their troops had yet penetrated into Prussia. There, accordingly, Eugene collected his forces, and terminated his long and mournful retreat from the Niemen, a distance of nearly four hundred miles. Here, by drawing to his standard the whole troops in Pomerania, as well as all the Saxons and Bavarians who were within reach, he contrived to muster nearly forty thousand men for the defence of the great military barrier of the Elbe, even after deducting the garrisons left in the fortresses on the Oder.¹

CHAP.
LXXIV.
1813.
March 10.

¹ Jom. iv.
261, 262.
Fain, i. 72,
73. Schoell,
x. 186, 187.

Meanwhile the Russians, though severely weakened by their prodigious march, and the necessity of blockading so many fortresses, advanced with extraordinary vigour and expedition. While Alexander still remained at Kalisch, Kutusoff, following on the traces of the retreating enemy, advanced his headquarters to Buntzlau. But he had not been long at rest in that town, when that gallant veteran, whose sword had delivered Russia in the extremity of her peril, and achieved the overthrow of the mightiest armament of which history has preserved a record, terminated his eventful career. His constitution, already almost exhausted by the hardships and fatigues of the campaign, there sunk under an attack of the malignant typhus fever, which, springing as usual from the effects of famine and misery, had hung upon the traces of the retreating French army. It had already begun to diffuse that frightful epidemic, which proved nearly as fatal to their ranks as the snows of Russia, and for the next four years visited and spread its ravages through every kingdom in Europe.²

21.
Death of
Kutusoff.

March 6.

² Aperçu de
la Camp. de
1813, 27.
Jom. iv.
262.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

22.

Appoint-
ment of
Wittgen-
stein to the
command,
and capture
of Berlin.

The Emperor of Russia was much embarrassed in the choice of his successor. The claims of Barclay de Tolly were great, and the Emperor in secret was desirous of recognising them. His able retreat from the Niemen to Borodino had gained for him the admiration of every military man in Europe; while his generous and unabated zeal in the public service, under the orders of Kutusoff, had proved that his patriotic spirit was equal to his military ability. But these reasons, strong as they were, appeared to be more than balanced by the distrust which the soldiers entertained of him as a foreigner who had not yet been rendered illustrious by any signal victory, and whose principal achievement had been that of retiring before the enemy. Moved by these considerations, Alexander, though with reluctance, relinquished his desire to reinstate him in the supreme command, and conferred it on Count Wittgenstein. In military ability, that brave general was decidedly inferior to Barclay, but his gallant stand on the Dwina had contributed powerfully to the success of the campaign, and his recent exploits on the Beresina had inspired the soldiers with that confidence which brilliant triumphs, if accompanied by tolerable conduct, seldom fail to produce. His first steps were eminently calculated to increase this favourable disposition. Following up the retiring French columns, he approached the Prussian capital: the Cossack advanced-guard had traversed Berlin on the 4th of March, amidst the enthusiastic shouts of the inhabitants; and on the 11th the headquarters of the whole army were transferred to that city, while Cara St-Cyr, with all the troops he could collect on the Lower Elbe, threw himself into Hamburg. The whole right bank of that river was evacuated by the French troops, and Magdeburg and Wittenberg became the principal pivots on which the Viceroy's army, charged with the defence of the upper part of its course, rested.¹

It was impossible that this rapid and uninterrupted course of success, inducing as it did the liberation of the

March 11.

¹ Aperçu de
la Camp. de
1813, 27,
28. Jom.
iv. 262.
Schoell, x.
186, 187.

whole Prussian monarchy from the grasp of the enemy, with the exception of a few blockaded fortresses, should not have had an immediate and powerful effect on the dispositions of the cabinet of Berlin. The first indications of the disposition of Frederick William to set himself free from the fetters with which he had so long been enchained, were given by his sudden departure from Potsdam, where he then resided, on the night of the 23d January, for Breslau, where he arrived on the 25th. The motive of this journey, however, was not by any means to break at once with France. On the contrary, the vehement sallies against that country which were breaking out on all sides were repressed by order of the court, and every effort was made to restrain the open declaration of the national feeling, now become so excited as to be almost incapable of repression. The real object of the monarch and his cabinet was, to place himself in a situation where he was no longer exposed, as at Berlin, to the danger of seizure by the French generals: and where, in a place of at least temporary security, he could pursue those measures which, by putting Prussia in a respectable posture of defence, might enable it to take advantage of the present crisis to recover a portion of its lost territories and fallen consideration in Europe. The King individually, however, still inclined to the French alliance, from a sense of personal honour; and Prince Hatzfeld, who had been despatched to Paris on the first intelligence being received of York's convention, reiterated the conditions on which the cabinet of Berlin was still inclined to draw more close the bonds of connexion with the French Emperor, and bring to his support a powerful army of sixty thousand men.¹

But in order to support these offers, and put Prussia in a condition to stipulate advantageous terms with either party to which it might ultimately incline, warlike measures of the most decisive kind were adopted by the government. By a royal decree, dated Breslau, Feb-

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

23.

Departure
of Frederick
William
from Berlin.

Jan. 23.

Jan. 11.

¹ Schoell, x.
192. Hard.
xii. 27, 28.

24.

Great levies
of troops in
Prussia.
Feb. 3.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

ruary 3, an appeal was made, on the preamble that the country was in danger, to young men of all ranks, from the age of seventeen to that of twenty-four, not subject to the legal conscription, to enter the army, in order to form companies of volunteers, to be annexed to the regiments of infantry and cavalry already in the service. It was declared, at the same time, though in the excited state of the public mind unnecessarily, that no young man between these years, who had not served in the ranks in one or other of these ways, should obtain any honour, distinction, or employment from the government.

Feb. 9.

By a still more urgent appeal on the 9th of the same month, all grounds of exemption from the legal service in the army were declared suspended during the continuance of the war. By an edict on the day following, it was declared, that though the previous decree had fixed the age from seventeen to twenty-four as that in which service was in this manner required, yet it was not thereby intended to limit the right of enrolment to those who, being above the age of twenty-four, might still be desirous of serving their country ; so that in effect the whole youth of the kingdom were summoned round the royal standard.¹

¹ Decrees, 3d and 4th Feb. 1813. Schoell, x. 192, 193. Hard. xii. 27, 28.

25.

Universal and noble outbreak of patriotic spirit in Prussia.

But no denunciations of royal displeasure if backwardness was evinced, no exhortations to stand by their country in the hour of peril, were needed to make the Prussian youth fly to arms. Though the intentions of government were not authentically known, and a degree of uncertainty, in fact, at that period pervaded the councils of the cabinet of Berlin which the nation little suspected, yet many facts had occurred which conspired with the unanimous wish of the people to render the belief universal, that a breach with France and an alliance with Russia were in contemplation. The convention of York, though formally disapproved of by the King, had not yet practically led to his being deprived of the command of his corps ; the unresisted march

of the Russian troops across the whole Prussian territory ; the transports of joy with which they had been received in the principal cities ;* the general fermentation which pervaded all ranks of the people, from an undefined sense of approaching deliverance ; the direction of the King's journey from Potsdam to Breslau, where he was in the line of the Russian advance, instead of Magdeburg, where he would have been in the centre of the French power ; joined to the invitation to the whole youth of the kingdom to rally round the national standard, on the solemn announcement that the country was in danger—all conspired to spread a universal belief that the disasters of Jena and Auerstadt might yet be effaced, and that the last stake for national salvation was about to be thrown. Incredible was the ardour which this conviction excited among the Prussian youth. The young men of all classes, brave, ardent, and impetuous as their ancestors in the days of Arminius and Witikind, had been excited to the very highest degree of indignation by the unbounded license and rapacity which, under the imperial banners and by the imperial authority, French cupidity had so long exercised in every part of the country. Now was the appointed time ; now was the day of salvation. And nobly did the Prussian youth on that crisis discharge their duty to their country and mankind. Could old Frederick have risen from his grave, he might well have been proud of his people ; and the patriots of every future age will recur to it as one of the brightest spots in the annals of history.¹

¹ Schoell, x.
193. Hard.
xii. 34, 35.

On all sides there was one unanimous cry for arms. Such was the rapidity with which the volunteers crowded in, that the government functionaries, so far from being in a condition to serve out to them military weapons,

* On the 10th February, the ladies of the town of Neustettin, where the Prussian general, Bulow, had his headquarters, gave a ball to the gay and adventurous young Russian general, Chernicheff. Two days afterwards Bulow's cantonments were opened to afford a passage to the light troops of the enemy across the Oder.—FAIN, i. 69.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

26.

Extraordi-
nary rapi-
dity with
which the
army was
recruited.

were not even able for a considerable period to inscribe their names. Nine thousand enrolled themselves in Berlin alone, in the first three days; a city not, at that period, containing above a hundred and eighty thousand inhabitants.* The same spirit prevailed in every part of the country. Universally the villages were filled with robust multitudes crowding in to enrol their names as volunteers; the schoolhouses in the rural districts, the officers of the municipality in the burghs, were surrounded, from morning till night, with dense masses, demanding arms to save their country. The generous ardour burned with peculiar vehemence in the youth at the universities, a very numerous class in Germany, and among whom the associations of the Tugendbund and the Burschenschaft had spread far and wide the utmost enthusiasm in the cause of their country, and the most unbounded hatred of French domination. All who were noble or generous in the country, all who were elevated in patriotism or burning with genius, were to be seen in the ranks of the volunteers. Körner hastened from Vienna to join their ranks, and entered the army as a common soldier.† The ministers of state — Stein, Hardenberg, Dohna, and Scharnhorst—were secretly allied to these associations,¹ and did their utmost to emancipate the mind of the King from the bonds by which he still conceived himself

¹ Hard. xii.
34, 35.
Schoell, x.
193. Camp.
of 1813-14.

* "No sooner was the King's proclamation known, than every man straightway hastened to clap his 'heart' on his breast; the next day not a single person was to be seen in the streets without the national symbol. Our colours, indeed, are not brilliant—white and black; but the white shall express the purity of our cause—the black our mourning for the fatherland, and our stern determination to avenge it. We shall add red when we return triumphant from the combat; for out of blood and death freedom shall grow."—VON B. to FORSTER, *Berlin*, 17th March 1813; FORSTER, 108.

† "Germany is up; the Prussian eagle awakens in all hearts the great hope of Germany, at least Northern Germany, freedom. My muse sighs for her fatherland; let me be her worthy disciple. Yes, dearest father! I have made up my mind to be a soldier! I am ready to cast away the gifts that fortune has showered upon me here, to win myself a fatherland, were it with my blood."—THEODORE KÖRNER to his Father—*Vienna*, 10th March 1813; *Deutsche Pandora*, 87.

—Jahn, Fichte, Arndt, and Massenbach—more openly fanned the patriotic flame, and produced that unbounded enthusiasm which made Prussia rise as one man at the call of the fatherland.

But patriotic ardour and devotion, however important elements in military strength, are not of themselves capable of creating an army. Discipline is necessary; training is required: previous organisation and preparation must come to the aid of present courage and enthusiasm. In these vital particulars, without which their utmost efforts at the moment would, in all probability, have proved entirely unavailing, Prussia already stood pre-eminent. The wisdom of her government had provided both the framework in her army and the practical experience among her people, capable of at once turning the whole strength of the nation to warlike achievement. The admirable system has already been mentioned,¹ by which the Prussian cabinet, under the direction of Stein and Scharnhorst, taught wisdom in the salutary school of adversity, though restricted by the treaty of Tilsit to an army of forty-two thousand men, had contrived in reality to have a hundred and twenty thousand on foot. This was done by limiting the period of service which each individual was bound to serve to two or three years, and maintaining a number of volunteers ready to enter the regular army on the first vacancy, who, though not formally enrolled, were already instructed in the rudiments of the military art. The young men thus selected were the flower of the nation. No rank, wealth, or station was taken as an excuse: three years' military service, beginning with the musket on the shoulder, were as indispensable to the sons of the king as to the offspring of the humblest cottager in the land. To adapt the army to the feelings and habits of the elevated classes who thus, without exception, passed through its ranks, the severe laws of German discipline had been abrogated;

CHAP.
LXXIV.
—
1813.

27.
Admirable
organisation
in Prussia,
which turn-
ed this spirit
to the best
account.

¹ *Anle*, ch.
li. § 14.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

¹ Schoell, x.
190. Hard.
ix. 467.

the old system of promoting only according to seniority relaxed, in order to make way for the advancement of talent and ambition ; and numerous institutions established, calculated to awaken the sentiment of honour in the breast of the soldier, and make him consider the loss of it as his greatest humiliation.¹

28.

And great
additions
made to the
matériel of
the army.

Nor had less care been bestowed upon the *matériel* of the army than the composition and extension of its ranks. By purchases made in Austria, or manufactories of their own recently established, they had succeeded in procuring a hundred and fifty thousand muskets in excellent condition ; the field-pieces, which had been almost entirely lost in the disastrous campaign of 1806, had been restored by melting down the bronze cannon in the fortresses, and replacing them by substitutes of iron ; eight strongholds, still in the hands of the national troops, had been put in a respectable posture of defence, and a train of field artillery and caissons, adequate for a hundred and twenty thousand men, was already prepared. Add to this, that the losses of the Prussians in the last campaign had been by no means in the same proportion as those of the French, or of the contingents of the other German states. The snows of Russia had only occasioned the loss of two batteries of horse-artillery, which Napoleon had accidentally met in Russia, and forced, contrary to the treaty, to accompany him to Moscow ; and York's convention had preserved his corps from those disasters which had proved so fatal to the other divisions of the army. Thus it was that Prussia, even though reduced to half her former territory and population by the treaty of Tilsit, was able to reappear with such distinction on the theatre of Europe ; and that the previous wisdom and foresight of her government enabled her to turn to such marvellous account the present burst of patriotic enthusiasm among her people.²

² Hard. ix.
467, 468,
and xii. 34,
35. Schoell,
x. 190, 192.

But while these efforts were made by the Prussian people, in the fond belief that the part of their govern-

ment was decidedly taken, and that the war of liberation was at hand, the King was still undecided to which side he should incline ; and it required all the efforts of his own ministers, and all the obstinacy of Napoleon, to throw him into the arms of Russia. Not that the monarch was ignorant of the spirit which pervaded his subjects, or felt less keenly than in former years the innumerable injuries and insults he had received from France. But he had a serious dread of violating a subsisting treaty of alliance, for the rupture of which no new cause of adequate magnitude could be assigned. In addition to this, he was strongly attached to that system of temporising, which had so long been the ruling policy of Prussia, which is, perhaps, necessarily the resort of the weaker state when exposed to collision with the stronger, and which had only been abandoned, on the eve of the battle of Jena, to precipitate the state into the abyss of misfortune. His views in the beginning of February were still essentially pacific, and were directed

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.
29.

Continued
difficulties
and indeci-
sion of the
King.

Feb. 5.

* "The King has conceived the idea that nothing would contribute more powerfully to advance the great work of peace than a truce, in virtue of which the French and Russian armies should mutually retire to a certain distance, and leave the intermediate country unoccupied between them. Would the Emperor Napoleon be disposed to enter into such an arrangement? Would he consent to restore the fortresses on the Oder, and that of Dantzic, to the Prussian troops jointly with the Saxons, and to withdraw his army behind the Elbe, provided the Emperor Alexander withdrew his beyond the Vistula?"—HARDENBERG'S *Note, 15th February 1813*; HARDENBERG, xii. 32.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

¹ St Marsan
to Berthier,
15th Feb.
1813. Fain,
i. 235, and
239. Hard.
xii. 32.

At the same time Hardenberg reiterated to St Marsan, the French ambassador, the most solemn assurances, that "the system of the King had undergone no alteration : that no overtures, direct or indirect, had been made to Russia : that he awaited with unequalled anxiety a reply from Paris ; because, in the present posture of affairs, if the Emperor approved the steps he had taken to secure the neutrality of Silesia, and would give some pecuniary assistance to Prussia, the alliance would be contracted more closely than ever ; and that nothing but despair would throw him into the arms of Russia."¹

30.
Manner in
which Napo-
leon receiv-
ed these ad-
vances from
Prussia.

There can be no doubt that these protestations on the part of the Prussian monarch were sincere, and that it only lay with Napoleon, by giving him some pecuniary assistance, and repaying a portion of the enormous war contributions, amounting to 93,000,000 of francs, (£3,720,000,) which had been levied on his dominions in the preceding campaign, to secure the cabinet of Berlin in the French alliance, and gain an auxiliary force of sixty thousand men to aid him in defending the course of the Elbe. It was to these points, and, above all, assistance in money, which, in the exhausted state of Prussia, was an indispensable preliminary to any military efforts, that all the exertions of Frederick-William were directed.* But Napoleon was inexorable. He was firmly convinced that these protestations of fidelity on the part of the Prussian monarch were mere devices to gain time ; that the policy of the court was determined on, and even that, if it were not, such was the vehemence

* "Tell the Emperor, that, as to pecuniary sacrifices, they are no longer in my power ; but that, if he will give me money, I can raise and arm 50,000 or 60,000 men for his service. I am the natural ally of France ; by changing my system of policy, I would only endanger my position, and give the Emperor grounds for treating me as an enemy. I know that there are fools who regard France as struck down ; but you will soon see it present an army of 300,000 men, as brilliant as the former. I will support all the sacrifices required of me, to secure the prosperity and future welfare of my family and people."—FREDERICK-WILLIAM'S words, in SAINT MARSAN to DUKE OF BASSANO, 12th January 1813 ; FAIN, i. 213.

of the national feeling, that it would ere long force the cabinet into the Russian alliance. He deemed it, therefore, useless to dissemble any longer, and told General Krusemarck, who had been sent from Breslau to conclude the negotiation, that he was not disposed to furnish arms to his enemies; and that he would give Prussia no pecuniary assistance or relief whatever.* This refusal, concurring with an active correspondence which at the same period was going on between Hardenberg and Kutusoff, after the arrival of the Emperor Alexander at Kalisch, relative to the neutrality of the Prussian states, on which the King was so anxiously bent, gave great additional weight to the numerous party in his council who were inclined to the Russian alliance. At length, with great difficulty, they obtained his consent—but only the evening before it was signed—to the TREATY OF KALISCH, the foundation-stone of that grand alliance which so soon after accomplished the overthrow of Napoleon, and deliverance of Europe.¹

CHAP.
LXXXIV.

1813.

Feb. 28.
1 St Marsan
to Maret,
Feb. 15,
1813. Fain,
i. 235, 237.
Jom. iv.
261. Hard.
xii. 32, 33.

By this treaty, an alliance offensive and defensive was established between the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia, for the prosecution of the war with France; and in order to carry it on with vigour, it was stipulated that the former should bring a hundred and fifty thousand men into the field, the latter eighty thousand, independent of the garrisons of the strong places. Neither of the contracting powers was to conclude either a peace or a truce without the consent of the other; they were jointly to make efforts to induce the cabinet of Vienna

31.
Treaty of
Kalisch
ratified.
March 1.

* “The refusal on the Emperor’s part of any pecuniary aid to the account of his claims for war contributions; the noise made about the affair of York; above all, the refusal to agree to his proposal, that he should negotiate for the neutrality of Silesia, have awakened anew all the King’s alarm, and persuaded him that his ruin was resolved on. It was a report he received of an intention on the part of the French to carry him off, which originated with a French officer, that occasioned his departure from Potsdam to Breslau.” “If the Emperor conceives it for his interest to preserve Prussia, and will do a little for it, he will have no difficulty in gaining his point; it will be very easy to retain the King in the line he has hitherto followed.”—SAINT MARSAN to MARET, 15th February 1813; FAIN, i. 236, 237.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

to join their alliance, and to lose no time in treating with England, in order that Prussia might obtain those subsidies of which she stood so much in need to complete her armaments. The convention was to be kept secret for two months, but in the mean time to be privately communicated to England, Austria, and Sweden. Such were the public articles of this important treaty ; but the secret conditions were still more material to the future interests of the Prussian monarchy. By these, the Emperor of Russia engaged never to lay down his arms until Prussia was reconstituted, in all respects, statistical, financial, and geographical, as it had stood not only anterior to the war of 1806, but with such additions, especially in the way of uniting the old provinces to Silesia, as should give it more consistence, and render it an effectual bulwark of the Russian empire.¹

¹ See the Treaty in Martens' Sup. iii. 234, and Schoell, xii. 548.

32.
Energetic
military
measures
adopted by
Prussia.

March 14.

March 16.

March 11.

Frederick-William, who was only brought to accede to this treaty with the utmost difficulty,* was well aware that his political existence was thenceforth wound up with the success of Russia in the German war. His first words, after agreeing to the alliance, were—"Henceforth, gentlemen, it is an affair of life and death." Great pains, accordingly, were taken to conceal the treaty from the knowledge of the French ambassador. But, notwithstanding every effort, its existence soon transpired ; and Alexander having arrived at Breslau from Kalisch in the middle of March, the terms of intimacy on which the two monarchs lived could no longer be concealed, and it was justly thought unnecessary to dissemble any longer. Two days afterwards, accordingly, the conclusion of the treaty was intimated to the French ambassador, St Marsan, at Breslau, and on the same day to the minister of foreign affairs at Paris. Shortly before a royal edict

* "The King of Prussia," said Napoleon, "in his private character, is a good, loyal, and honourable man ; but in his political capacity, he was unavoidably forced to yield to necessity. You were always the master with him when you had force on your side and the hand uplifted."—LAS CASES, ii. 365.

had appeared, which declared the conduct of Generals York and Massenbach entirely free from blame in the convention with the Russian general Diebitch; and these steps were followed, on the 19th of the same month, by one more decisive, which pointed to the formidable national war which was about to be raised against the French in Germany. By this convention, it was stipulated between Russia and Prussia :—"1. That they should forthwith issue a proclamation, to announce that they had no other object but to rescue Germany from the domination of France, and to invite all lesser princes to concur in that great undertaking, under pain of losing their states. 2. To establish a central council of administration, composed of a delegate from each power, in order to govern provisionally the conquered districts, and divide the revenue between Russia, Prussia, and the regency of Hanover. 3. To organise all the countries between Saxony and Holland, with the exception of the possessions of the house of Hanover and the ancient Prussian provinces, into five great sections, each with a civil and military governor at its head. And lastly, to organise in these provinces both an army of the line and a levy *en masse*." Four days afterwards the dissolution of the Confederation of the Rhine was announced by a proclamation of the Russian general's; and the Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin gave the first example of patriotic devotion, by publicly renouncing his connexion with that league, into which he had been one of the last and most unwilling to enter.¹

CHAP.
LXXIV.
1813.

March 19.

March 23.

¹ Martens, xii. 564.
Schoell's Recueil, iv. 335. Hist. des Trait. x. 195, 196.

When acts of hostility so decisive were in progress on both sides, and injuries so deep had been inflicted on the one hand, and were preparing on the other, it is of little moment to recapitulate what were the ostensible grounds of complaint put forth by the respective cabinets. These, as usual in diplomatic manifestoes, did not contain the real grounds of hostility; inconsiderable causes of dissension were put forward to conceal more serious ones,

33.
Progress of the negotiations between Prussia and France.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

too deeply felt to be mentioned. Prussia, on her part, independently of the innumerable vexations and injuries inflicted on her people since the peace of Tilsit, rested on three recent grounds of complaint :—the refusal by the French government to enter into any accounting for the immense furnishings in kind, amounting to ninety-three million of francs, (£3,720,000,) made by her provinces during the last campaign, or admit them as articles of charge against the arrears of contributions, or advance any part of the pay due by France for the Prussian contingent ; the declinature on their part, also, to recognise or sanction, in any form, the neutrality of Silesia, for which the King of Prussia had so anxiously contended, and which was established by the convention 24th February 1812 ; and the arbitrary assumption of command taken over Bulow's corps, which, without the consent of the King, had been placed under the orders of Marshal Victor. In reply, the cabinet of the Tuileries, without denying that the accounting for which the cabinet of Berlin contended was well-founded in principle, maintained that the details of furnishings, for which they claimed credit, were not accurate nor sufficiently vouched ; that the exemption from the passage of troops which the convention of 24th February 1812 secured for a part of the Silesian province, could not be construed as importing an entire neutrality ; and that the Prussians had little cause to complain of Bulow's corps having been put under Victor's orders, when, during the alliance between the two countries, his corps had previously admitted a passage through its ranks to the Russian troops on their route to the Oder. On these mutual recriminations, it seems sufficient to observe, that the Prussian complaints seem well founded on the first head, and the French on the two last ; for it is clear that the cabinet of Berlin had as good cause for insisting that the enormous requisitions levied on their people should be taken into account in settling the arrears of pay and war

contributions, as that of the Tuileries had for representing the passage of the Russians through Bulow's corps as an infringement of the alliance, and the much-sought neutrality of Silesia as an unwarranted extension of the article in the former treaty, concerning the passage of troops through that province. But it is superfluous to enter into any lengthened detail on the subject, when the ostensible grounds of complaint on both sides were so widely different from, and immeasurably inferior to, the real causes of the war. Prussia struck for the deliverance of Germany, France for the preservation of her European domination.¹

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

¹ See Prussian Manifesto, March 16, 1813. *Fain*, i. 243, 249; and *Moniteur*, 1813, No. 95.

The real motives and reasons of the war were summed up in a clear manner in the concluding paragraph of Prince Hardenberg's declaration of war :—"The King, in his political conduct since the peace of Tilsit, has had mainly in view to secure to his people a state of tranquillity, in order to give them the means of raising themselves from the abyss of misfortune into which they had been precipitated. With that view he has submitted, with the resignation which circumstances rendered imperative, to the arbitrary exactions, the enormous burdens, the vexations without end, to which he has been subjected. The circumstances in which Prussia has been placed, since the conclusion of the last campaign, are known to all the world. Reduced to its own resources—abandoned by the power to which it was bound, and from which it could not obtain even common justice—with two-thirds of its provinces exhausted, and their inhabitants reduced to despair—it was compelled to take counsel for itself, and to find in its own people the means of salvation. It is in the fidelity and patriotism of its subjects, joined to the generous sympathy of a great power which has taken compassion on its situation, that the King can alone find the means of extricating himself from his difficulties, and regaining the state of independence which may secure the future prosperity of the monarchy."²

34.
Real motives of the war, as stated in Hardenberg's declaration.

² Hardenberg's note. March 16, 1813. *Fain*, i. 243.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

35.

Answer of
Maret on
the part of
France.

To this it was replied by M. Maret on the part of the French government : — “ As long as the chances of war were favourable to us, your court remained faithful to its engagements ; but scarcely had the premature rigours of winter brought back our armies to the Niemen, than the defection of General York excited the most serious suspicions. The equivocal conduct of your court in such an important conjuncture, the departure of the King for Breslau, the treachery of General Bulow, who opened to the enemy a passage to the Lower Oder, the publication of ordinances, calling a turbulent and factious youth to arms, the assembling at Breslau of the well-known leaders of the disturbing sects, and the principal instigators of the war of 1806, left no doubt of the intentions of your cabinet ; the note of the 27th March has given us no surprise. His majesty prefers an open enemy to an ally always ready to abandon him. What can Prussia now do ? It has done nothing for Europe ; it has done nothing for its ancient ally ; it will do nothing for peace. A power whose treaties are considered as binding only so long as they are deemed serviceable, can never be either useful or respectable. The finger of Providence is manifest in the events of last winter ; it has produced them, to distinguish the true from the false friends of his majesty, and to give him power to reward the one and punish the other. His majesty feels for your situation, M. Baron, as a soldier and a man of honour, on being obliged to sign such a declaration.”¹*

¹ Maret's
Reply, April
1, 1813.
Fain, i.
260, 265.

Two additional conventions were signed at Kalisch

* It was stated in Krusemarck's final note of 27th March 1813, that “ during the last campaign, while the state exhausted all its resources to provide in the public magazines the stipulated furnishings in kind, the French armies lived at free quarters on the inhabitants. The French authorities insisted upon *both* the literal performance of the treaty, and the daily support of the troops. They carried off by main force the sacred property of the inhabitants, without giving them either any account or indemnification ; and in this way Prussia has lost 70,000 *horses*, and *above* 20,000 *carriages*.” Baron Fain does not deny these exactions, but only alleges that they were unavoidable, and that they would have been carried to the credit of the arrears of contributions due by Prussia.—See FAİN, i. 260.

immediately after the declaration of war, for the further regulation of the vast interests of insurgent Germany, with which the Russian and Prussian monarchs were now charged. By the first, Count Kotzebue and Baron Stein were appointed members, on the part of Russia, of the administrative council created by the convention of Breslau, and Schoen and Rediger on that of Prussia. These functionaries were directed to proceed forthwith to Dresden, and assume the administration of the whole countries lying on the right bank of the Elbe ; while, by the second, minute directions were laid down for the provisioning, billeting, and marches of the Russian armies, as long as they should remain in the Prussian territories.¹

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

36.

Additional
conventions
at Kalisch.
April 4 and
7.¹ Schoell, x.
198, 199,
551. Mar-
ten's Sup.
v. 566, 569.

Outstripping even his couriers in speed, the Emperor Napoleon traversed Poland and Germany in fourteen days, and regained the capital of France before the imperial government at Paris was even aware that he had quitted the army. On the 5th December, as already noticed, he had quitted Smorgoni in Lithuania, and on the 10th passed through Warsaw, and had his celebrated conversation with the Abbé de Pradt ;² on the 14th he was at Dresden, and wrote to the Emperor of Austria, " that in spite of his great fatigue, his health was never better." In the same letter he strongly urged him to augment his auxiliary force to sixty thousand men. On the 18th, at eleven at night, he arrived at the Tuileries, having accomplished the journey from Smorgoni in thirteen days. He had written without ever mentioning his intended return, so that, being totally unexpected, and not recognised in his humble equipage, he had some difficulty in getting the gates of the palace opened at that hour of the night. Melancholy and dejected, the Empress had just retired to rest, and her attendants were about to do the same, when the voices of men were heard in the antechamber, and immediately after two figures, wrapped

37.

Arrival of
Napoleon at
the Tuil-
eries.

Dec. 5.

Dec. 10.

² *Ante*, ch.
lxxiii. §§
91, 108.
Dec. 14.

Dec. 18.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

in travelling cloaks, entered the apartment. The maid of honour in attendance instantly rushed forward to secure the door which led to the Empress's room, when Caulaincourt drew aside the cloak of the foremost of the strangers, and the Emperor was recognised. A cry of astonishment from the lady made the Empress aware that something extraordinary was passing in the antechamber, and she had just leaped out of bed when the Emperor caught her in his arms. Their interview was tender and affectionate; and although Duroc and Count Lobau, who had left Smorgoni a few hours later than the Emperor, did not arrive with his papers for two days after, yet early next morning he commenced his labours in the cabinet, and a new impulse was communicated to every branch of the administration.¹

¹ Mad. Durand, 173. Fain, MS. de 1813, i. 1, 9. Napoleon to Francis, Dec. 14, 1813.

38.
Universal consternation at Paris on the news of the retreat and the Emperor's arrival being received.

At nine o'clock a levee was held, and, as the news of the Emperor's unexpected arrival had spread like wildfire through the metropolis, it was very numerously attended. The 29th bulletin, containing the account of the disasters of the retreat, had not yet arrived, though it had left the army before the Emperor, and no other feeling than that of surprise at his sudden return was felt by the persons present. In the course of the forenoon, however, it came, and was immediately published. No words can paint the feelings of stupor, consternation, and astonishment, which pervaded the metropolis when the disastrous news was promulgated. The calamity, great as it was, and truly as it had been revealed in that celebrated narrative, was exaggerated by the public terror. It was thought that the old system of concealment had been pursued on this, as on all previous occasions; that the army had been totally destroyed; and that the sudden return of the Emperor was owing to his being, literally speaking, the sole survivor of his followers. Gloom and disquietude, accordingly, pervaded every countenance at the levee on the morning of the succeeding day, which was attended by all the principal officers of state; and

the utmost anxiety was universally felt to hear what details the Emperor himself might furnish as to the extent of the calamity. Napoleon appeared, however, calm and collected ; and so far from seeking to evade the questions which all were so anxious to put, he anticipated the wishes of those present, and himself began the conversation on the disasters of the retreat. "Moscow," said he, "had fallen into our power ; we had surmounted every obstacle ; the conflagration even had in no degree lessened the prosperous state of our affairs ; but the rigour of winter induced upon the army the most frightful calamities. In a few nights all was changed ; cruel losses were experienced ; they would have broken my heart, if in such circumstances I had been accessible to any other sentiments but regard to the welfare of my people."¹

CHAP.
LXXXIV.
1813.

¹ *Moniteur*,
Dec. 20,
1812. Fain,
i. 8, 10.

The undisguised admissions and intrepid countenance of the Emperor had a surprising effect in restoring public confidence, and dissipating the impression produced by the greatest external disasters recorded in history. The old confidence in his fortune returned ; his star appeared to emerge from the clouds by which it had been obscured, and again to shine forth in renovated lustre. His words, eagerly gathered and repeated, were soon circulated in the public journals through the empire ; addresses, containing assurances of undiminished loyalty and unshaken confidence, were speedily presented by all the public bodies in Paris, and followed by similar ones from the chief towns of France. Soon the whole cities of the empire approached the throne with eloquent protestations of eternal loyalty and unchangeable devotion. The cities of Rome, Milan, Florence, Hamburg, Amsterdam, and Turin, particularly distinguished themselves by the fervour of their enthusiasm on this occasion.* Their addresses

39.
Restoration
of public
confidence
throughout
the empire.

* "Our kingdom, sire ! is your handiwork : it owes to you its laws, its monuments, its roads, its prosperity, its agriculture, the honour of its arts, and the internal peace which it enjoys. The people of Italy declare, in the face of the universe, that there is no sacrifice which they are not prepared to make, to enable your majesty to complete the great work intrusted to you by

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1812.

¹ Fain, i. 11,
12. Moni-
teur, Dec.
25, 1812,
to Jan. 20,
1813.

would be worthy of the highest admiration, as indicating a dignified constancy in misfortune, if the praises of servitude were not always suspicious ; and if the subsequent conduct of the same functionaries, when adversity really reached them, had not demonstrated that their present overflowing loyalty was rather the result of anticipation of future and prosperous, than of superiority to present and adverse fortune.¹

40.
Conspiracy
of Malet.

But, though not insensible to these striking marks of devotion, and fully alive to the necessities of his situation, it was neither by the one nor the other that the attention of the Emperor was now riveted. It was treason at Paris which occupied his thoughts—it was on THE CONSPIRACY OF MALET that his eyes were fixed. This extraordinary event, of which the Emperor received intelligence shortly before he left the army in Russia, might well arrest his attention ; for it demonstrated beyond a doubt the sandy foundation on which, amidst so many protestations of fidelity and devotion, his authority, and the prospects of succession in his family, were rested. An obscure but most able man, of the name of Malet, whose restless and enterprising character had caused him to be detained four years in custody at Paris, had conceived, in the solitude of his cell, the project of overturning the imperial dynasty ; and, what is still more extraordinary, he all but carried it into execution.* He had two accomplices—Lafon, an old abbé, a prisoner with himself, and Rateau, a young corporal on guard in his place of detention. They had long been preparing the

Providence. In extraordinary circumstances extraordinary sacrifices are required, and our efforts shall be unbounded. You require arms, armies, gold, fidelity, constancy. All we possess, sire ! we lay at your majesty's feet. This is not the suggestion of authority—it is conviction, gratitude, the universal cry produced by the passion for our political existence."—*Address from Milan, 27th Dec. 1812 ; FAIN, i. 12.*

* Malet was born on the 28th June 1754, at Dole, and passed his early life in the army, where he commanded one of the first battalions of the Jura at the commencement of the Revolution. He was afterwards implicated in some illegal transactions at Civita Vecchia, in the Roman States, and was in conse-

Aug. 24,
1806.

means of effecting his object ; and the whole rested on a fabricated story of the death of the Emperor. To support this assertion, Malet had forged a decree of the senate, by which the imperial government was abolished, himself created governor of Paris, and a provisional government established. Various orders on the treasury were also prepared, calculated to dispel the doubts or shake the fidelity of the chief persons to whom the touchstone was to be first applied. Having taken these precautions, Malet with ease eluded the loose surveillance under which he was detained, and, dressed in the uniform of general of brigade, presented himself at the gate of the barracks of the 2d regiment and 10th cohort. Being refused admittance till the colonel, Soulier, gave orders, he repaired to the house of the latter, which was not far distant, and announced to him that the Emperor had been killed on the 7th October before Moscow ; that the senate had taken its measures, and that he himself had been appointed governor of Paris. The forged decree of the senate was well calculated to deceive even the most experienced, from the precision with which it was drawn, and the apparent authenticity of the signatures appended to it. But Malet had not trusted merely to these supports, for he also produced an appointment of Soulier as general of brigade, and a treasury order for 100,000 francs (£4000) for his use. Deceived or won, that officer gave into the snare, and accompanied the audacious insurgent into the barrack-yard.¹

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1812.

Oct. 22.

¹ Soulier's declaration, Fain, i. 145, 147. Thib. ix. 156. Savary, vi. 18, 19.

The chief difficulty in the enterprise was here to be sur-

quence deprived of his command, and sent before a commission of inquiry at Paris in July 1807 ; and in virtue of their sentence, he was confined in a place of detention till the affair should have blown over. In 1808, when he was still a prisoner, and while the Emperor was in Spain, he conceived the first idea of his extraordinary project ; but the sudden return of Napoleon to Paris disconcerted the design at that time ; and it continued fermenting in his mind till the Emperor's longer absence in Russia gave him an opportunity of renewing the design under more favourable circumstances, and when the conspirator had regained so much liberty as to be able to elude his guards.—FAIN, i. 14, 15.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1812.

41.

Progress
and great
success of
the con-
spiracy.

mounted ; and in the way in which he overcame it, Malet gave proofs of a vigorous character. He instantly assumed a decided tone—ordered the gates to be opened—mustered the soldiers by torchlight—announced the Emperor's death—and commanded the drums to beat, that the cohort should assemble to hear the decree read which announced the Emperor's death, and the abolition of the imperial government. Yielding to the habit of obedience, suspecting no deceit, and accustomed to similar changes during the Revolution, the soldiers obeyed without a murmur ; the acquiescence of the chief of the battalion was already secured by the order on the treasury for 100,000 francs, delivered at the time with the promise of future gratuities ; the common men were paralysed by the fatal intelligence of the Emperor's death, and knew not how to resist orders apparently emanating from such elevated functionaries. Malet instantly ordered a strong body to march with him to the prison of La Force, which they forthwith did ; and he there liberated Generals Lahorie and Guidal, sturdy republicans, of a bold character, who had long been confined by order of Napoleon. They immediately set out with him, and took command of the troops ; and before daylight three columns had marched in different directions, under the command of Malet, Lahorie, and Guidal, to gain possession of the principal posts in the city.¹

¹ Thib. ix.
157, 158.
Savary, vi.
19, 21. Fain,
i. 144, 147.

42.

Savary and
others ar-
rested by
the conspi-
rators.

They were all successful beyond what their most sanguine hopes could have anticipated. Lahorie made straight for the hotel of Savary, the minister of police, forced his way into the house, surprised the great functionary in bed, made him prisoner, and after some altercation, carried him off to the prison of La Force, where he was received and lodged in safety. Guidal in like manner captured Pasquier, the prefect of police, and lodged him in the same place of security. Soulier, the colonel of the 10th cohort, who had been gained by the bribe above mentioned, made himself master of the Hotel de Ville, and stationed a strong force in the small square in front

of that building ; while another detachment, under Malet in person, took possession of the Place Vendôme. Frochot, the prefect of the department of the Seine, was riding into town from his country-house at a quarter past eight in the morning, when he was met by one of his servants on horseback, in great agitation, with a note from the Hotel de Ville, on the outside of which were written the ominous words, "*Fuit Imperator.*" On arriving at the Hotel de Ville, he found the front occupied by the National Guards, and received a despatch from Malet, styling himself Governor of Paris, ordering him to prepare the principal apartment in the building for the use of the "provisional government." Frochot was a man of probity and honour ; but, like many others of a similar character, he wanted the resolution necessary to carry him through such a crisis. Instead of simply discharging his duty, by declaring his adhesion to the young Napoleon, and endeavouring to induce the soldiers to abandon the blind enterprise in which they were engaged, he at once acquiesced, and went so far as to desire the officers at the Hotel de Ville to arrange the tables and apartment for the provisional government.¹

CHAP.
LXXIV.
1812.

¹ Sav. vi. 27,
29. Fain, i.
17, and Declaration of
Count Frochot, i. 157.
Thib. ix.
159.

While the inferior leaders of the conspiracy were achieving this astonishing success, its chief was not less fortunate in obtaining, almost without resistance, the command of the principal military posts in the city. He despatched forged orders, addressed to the commanders of two regiments of the paid guards of Paris, similar to those which had corrupted or deceived Soulier, and met with implicit obedience from both. By means of the one he gained possession of the whole barriers of the capital, which were closed, with positive orders to let none pass ; so that no messengers could be sent to the country for assistance. With the other he occupied the bank,—in which, at that period, there was a large treasure in specie,—the treasury, and the principal public offices. He himself meanwhile moved along the Rue St Honoré, with

43.
Continued
success of
Malet, who
shoots the
governor of
Paris.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1812.

a detachment of only fifty men, twenty-five of whom he directed to station themselves in front of the office of the *Etat-Major* of Paris. The possession of this post was of the highest importance, as it was the headquarters of military authority in the city. To effect this object, he sent a packet to the *Adjutant-General Doucet*, of a similar tenor with those given to *Soulier* and the other colonels, and containing his nomination as general of brigade, and a treasury order for one hundred thousand francs. *Doucet* lost his presence of mind; and, seeing the troops before the hotel, obeyed his orders so far as to send for *Laborde*, whom he had been commanded to put under arrest. Meanwhile *Malet* himself went to the hotel of *General Hullin*, the governor of Paris, with the other twenty-five men. He entered his hotel, accompanied by a captain of the regiment which followed him; and having asked to see *Hullin* in private, shot him with a pistol in the face when desired to show his orders, and left him severely, but not mortally wounded, weltering in his blood. After this extraordinary scene, *Malet* repaired to the *Adjutant-General Doucet's* office, still accompanied and obeyed by the officer and detachment, who were so fascinated by his audacity, that they saw nothing extraordinary or reprehensible in the apparent murder of their general before their eyes. Nothing was wanting but the command of the *adjutant-general's* office to give him the entire direction of the military force of Paris, of the telegraph, and with it of all France, which, it was well known, would never shake off its submission to the central authority of Paris, by whomsoever wielded. In truth, it was accident alone which prevented this consummation, after every real obstacle had been overcome.¹

¹ *Sav.* vi. 24,
25. *Thib.* vi.
158. *Fain*,
i. 17, 18.

44.
His subsequent seizure and overthrow.

It so happened, that when *Malet* with his detachment came to the hotel of the *adjutant-general*, *Laborde* was coming down the stair to go home and yield to arrest, and *Pasquier*, the *inspector-general* to the minister of police, entirely ignorant of what had occurred, was at the

CHAP.
LXXIV.
1812.

door, to make some inquiries about an Englishman whom he had arrested at Passy by orders of Savary. Malet's detachment stopped him agreeably to their orders ; but Laborde called to them to let him in : and the men, accustomed to obey his voice, allowed him to enter. This functionary, who had taken the charge of Malet in his place of detention, and had seen him there only the day before, no sooner beheld him in the room conversing with Doucet, than he exclaimed—" This is my prisoner : how the devil has he made his escape ? M. Malet, you have no right to leave your house without my leave." And immediately turning to Doucet, he said—" There is something here I don't understand ; arrest him, and I will go and inform the minister of police." Malet immediately put his hand on the pistol which he had in his pocket : the gesture was observed in a glass opposite ; and before he could draw it, Laborde and Doucet sprang upon him, threw him back on the floor, and disarmed him. The arrest of its chief disconcerted the whole conspiracy ; Laborde went out to the soldiers, informed them of the deceit which had been practised on them, and told them the Emperor was not dead. They immediately shouted "Vive l'Empereur!" and, ashamed of the extraordinary plot into which they had been drawn, returned with perfect docility to their barracks. By nine o'clock the minister of police was delivered from his prison : all was over ; and with so little bloodshed, that it might have passed for a melodrama, had it not been followed by a real tragedy, in the death of Malet, Guidal, Lahorie, and eleven others, who were shot next day on the plain of Grenelle, by orders of the government—an unnecessary piece of cruelty when applied to such a number, which Napoleon, had he been present, would certainly not have permitted.¹

¹ Sav. vi. 24.
Thib. ix.
160. Fain,
i. 17.

Malet behaved with great fortitude in his last moments, and had the generosity to exculpate his companions in misfortune by declaring that he alone conceived the conspiracy, and that he had no associates. When brought

45.
Heroic
death of
Malet.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1812.

before the judge examiners, his intrepidity was such as to excite awe even among those whom professional indifference had rendered callous to such scenes. "Who are your accomplices?" said Dejean, the president. "All France," replied he, "if I had succeeded, and you yourself at their head. When you openly attack a government by force, the palm is yours if you succeed; if not—death." The president turned pale, and asked no more questions. On his way to the plain of Grenelle, with an intrepid step, haranguing the soldiers in the masculine language of the Revolution, he said—"I fall, but I am not the last of the Romans." Most of the others lamented loudly their fate, at being sentenced along with a person whose very name they knew not two days before, and for accession to a treasonable plot of the objects of which they were entirely ignorant.¹

¹ Sav. vi. 24,
25. Thib. ix.
160, 162.
Fain, i. 17,
18. Cape-
figue, ix.
397, 398.

46.
Effect which
this con-
spiracy pro-
duced in
Paris.

When the news of this extraordinary conspiracy spread in Paris, it excited a prodigious sensation, but rather tending to ridicule than fear, as, before it was generally known, the danger was over. The ladies, in particular, were highly diverted at the ease with which their old tormentor, the minister of police, had been shut up in prison; and the saying made the tour of all the salons in Paris, "The Duke of Rovigo had better keep his eye on the barracks, instead of prying into our boudoirs." But those better acquainted with the real hazard which had been incurred, made no secret of the narrow escape which the imperial authority had made. "But for the singular accident," says Savary, "which caused the arrest of the minister of war to fail, Malet, in a few moments, would have been master of almost everything; and in a country so much influenced by the contagion of example, there is no saying where his success would have stopped. He would have had possession of the treasury, then extremely rich; the post-office, the telegraph, and the command of the hundred cohorts of the National Guards of France. He would soon have learned, by the intelligence brought by the estafettes, the alarming situation of affairs in

Russia ; and nothing could have prevented him from making prisoner the Emperor himself, if he had returned alone, or from marching to meet him if he had come at the head of his troops.”¹ Nor is there any solid foundation for the obvious remark, that the success of such a conspiracy, founded on falsehood, could have been only of an ephemeral duration ; for we have the authority of Thibaudeau for the assertion, that, to his personal knowledge, the conspiracy had ramifications in the provinces. It was set on foot by Barras and the old Jacobin party ; and it is impossible to say what would have been the effect of a sudden overthrow of the government, occurring at the very time of the promulgation of the news of the Moscow disasters.²

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1812.

¹ Sav. vi.
27, 31.

² Thib. ix.
163, 164.

But if the narrow escape which the imperial government had undergone, excited anxious disquietude in the breast of all classes,* tenfold deeper was the impression which it made on the far-seeing mind of Napoleon. One only idea took possession of his imagination—that in this crisis the succession of the King of Rome was, by common consent, set aside. One only truth was ever present to his mind—that the imperial crown rested on himself alone. The fatal truth, well known to the few read in historic lore, but hitherto concealed even from his piercing eyes, by the effulgence of his glory, had now been demonstrated—that the Revolution had destroyed the foundations of hereditary succession ; and that even the greatest achievements by him who had won the diadem, afforded no security that it would descend to his progeny. These reflections, which seem to have burst upon Napoleon all at once, when the news of this extraordinary

47.
Napoleon's
extraordi-
nary anxiety
on this con-
spiracy.

* “Above all, they were struck with the facility with which the conspirators had persuaded the troops of the death of the Emperor, without its ever having entered into the head of one of their officers to assure themselves whether it was true, or to bestow a thought on his son. These very soldiers suffered themselves to be led against the persons in possession of power, and without a murmur saw the governor of Paris, their general, struck down before their eyes, without a motion being made for his defence. It was in vain to disguise that such a state of things presaged many misfortunes.”—SAVARY, vi. 28.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1812.

¹ Fain, i.
168. Thib.
ix. 166, 167.48.
His speech
on the sub-
ject in the
Council of
State.

affair first reached him in Russia, weighed him down more than all the disasters of the Moscow retreat. They constituted the secret reason for his leaving the army ; they incessantly occupied his mind during his long and solitary journey ; and they found vent in impassioned and mournful expressions, when, a few days after his arrival, he convened the Council of State on the subject.¹

“ Gentlemen,” said he, “ we must no longer disbelieve miracles : attend to the report of M. Real on Malet’s conspiracy.” The report being read, he resumed—“ This is the consequence of the want of habit and proper ideas in France on the subject of succession. Sad effects of our revolutions ! At the first word of my death, at the first command of an unknown individual, officers lead their regiments to force the jails, and make prisoners of the highest authorities. A jailer quietly encloses the ministers of state within his doors. A prefect of the capital, at the command of a few soldiers, lends himself to the preparation of his great hall for the assembly of I know not what factious wretches ! And all this while the Empress is on the spot ; while the King of Rome is alive ; while my ministers and all the great officers of state are at hand. *Is a man, then, everything here ? Are institutions nothing—oaths nothing ?* It is to idæology that we are to attribute all these misfortunes : it is the error of its professors which necessarily induced, and in fact brought on, the reign of blood. Who proclaimed the principle of insurrection as a duty ? Who cast adulation before the people, in elevating them to a sovereignty which they were incapable of exercising ? When one is called to regenerate a state, it is principles diametrically the reverse which require to be followed. History paints the human heart : it is in history we must seek for the mirror of the advantages or evils of different species of legislation. Frochot is an honourable man : he is attached to the empire ; but his duty was to have devoted himself to death on the steps of the Hotel de Ville. A great example

is required from all functionaries. The noblest of deaths would be that of a soldier on the field of honour, if that of a magistrate perishing in defence of the throne and the laws were not more glorious still." These words gave the tone to all the public bodies to whom the examination into the affair was intrusted, and they unanimously reported that the prefect of the department of the Seine should be dismissed. This was accordingly done, and the urban guard of Paris was suppressed. But the matter was pushed no further, it being justly deemed inadvisable to make it known with what facility the regular soldiers had been misled, and with what ease the imperial authority had been all but overturned.¹

CHAP.
LXXIV.
1812.

¹ Thib. ix.
166, 167.
Fain, i. 168,
195. Pièces
Just., &c.
20, 21. Au-
dience of
Dec. 20.

In France, during the monarchy, the people had for their rallying cry—"The King is dead! long live the King!" On this occasion, however, when the report of the Emperor's death was spread and believed, no one exclaimed, "Long live the Emperor!" The fact is memorable: it was the first indication of the effects, not only of a new dynasty on the throne, but of a new era in the social history of France. The period of hereditary succession, with its stability, its security, its loyalty, its recollections, had passed away; personal qualities had become the sole title to distinction. In the effort to effect this change, all Europe had been convulsed to its centre; but the alteration had been made, and it could not be undone. Now, then, was seen the effect of the shock on one of the most momentous of national events, the demise of the sovereign who filled the throne. It, too, had become elective: personal qualities were alone the passport to power: the principle of hereditary succession had been destroyed. Even the greatest and most splendid qualities in the founder of a new dynasty, and the most unheard-of success attending his arms, could not, it was found, insure the succession of his own son, or shake the inextinguishable passion for a rotation of rulers, which had arisen from the principles of the Revolution. The

49.
Reflections
on this
event.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1812.

effects of that great convulsion were already unfolding themselves : the throne had become in effect elective ; all power depended upon office ; all office on the support of the military ; the support of the military on the suffrage of the Prætorian Guards at Paris. European had been exchanged for Asiatic civilisation ; and the dreams of perfectibility had terminated in the institutions of the Byzantine empire.

50.
Device con-
cerning the
French
regency.

Feb. 5,
1813.

Though Napoleon acquired the melancholy conviction, from this event, that the stability of his dynasty and the hopes of his son's succession rested on a sandy foundation, yet he resolved to leave nothing undone which might, for the present at least, guard against the dangers with which they were threatened. With this view, he resolved to fix at once, by an act of government, the cases in which a regency was to ensue, and the persons in whom the nomination was to be vested. By a *senatus-consultum* early in February, the right of appointing a regent was in the first instance vested in the Emperor : if he had not made a nomination, the right of doing so devolved on the Empress ; failing her, on the first prince of the blood ; and, in default of him, on the great dignitaries of the empire. The same decree fixed, in the most minute manner, the duration and extent of the regent's power, the formation of his council, the oath to be taken to the Empress if regent, the administration, during the continuance of the interregnum, of the royal domains, the forms for crowning the Empress-regent and the King of Rome. The object of the Emperor in this curious enactment obviously was to arrange everything for the transmission of the imperial authority, in the event of his absence or death, to the proper depositary, and to leave nothing to chance, or the inclinations of the military who happened to be in the capital at the time. He forgot that the real and only security for hereditary succession in the throne is to be found in the reverence with which it is regarded by the people ;¹ that this rever-

¹ Decree, Feb. 5, 1813. *Moniteur*, and *Thib.* ix. 293. *Mont.* vii. 183.

ence can neither be acquired in a single lifetime, nor be grafted on revolutionary changes ; and that to seek to establish it in a state which has destroyed its hereditary ranks, and the descent of private property, can give no greater stability than casting anchor in a moving quicksand.

Well aware that the losses of the preceding campaign made a great effort necessary, Napoleon resolved to take advantage of the first moments of alarm and excitement consequent on the promulgation of the disasters, to demand ample levies of men from the senate. "Great measures," said Regnaud St Jean d'Angely, the orator of government, "are necessary ; what suffices to-day may not be adequate to-morrow : the insolence of the conquerors of Louis XIV., the humiliation of the treaties of Louis XV., seem again to threaten us ; we are called to save France from these ignominious days." Amidst the tumult of feelings produced by these alarming revelations, the supporters of government demanded the immediate addition of three hundred and fifty thousand men to the armies, which was instantly and unanimously voted by the senate. The execution of the decree was intrusted to the war-minister, and the conscripts were zealously furnished by the people. Some of the principal cities of the empire, particularly Paris, Lyons, and Turin, even went beyond these immense levies, and voted regiments of volunteers to be raised and equipped at their own expense. Never did the patriotic and warlike spirit of the nation appear with more lustre ; never was the firmness of government more warmly seconded by the generous devotion of the people. Yet, amidst all the enthusiasm, the allocation of the conscription demonstrated how nearly the military strength of the empire had been exhausted by the efforts which had already been made. The whole youth who would arrive at the age which rendered them liable to the conscription in 1813 (from nineteen to twenty) had already been drained off by the great levy of the preceding year ;¹ and, accordingly, a hundred thousand of

CHAP.
LXXIV.
1812.

51.
Great con-
scription of
350,000
men voted
by the
Senate.

Jan. 9,
1813.

¹ *Ante*, ch.
lxx. § 51.
Senatus-
Consultum,
Jan. 11,
1813. Mo-
niteur,
Nov. 5,
Dec. 2,
Dec. 18.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1812.

52.
Napoleon
arranges his
differences
with the
Church.

¹ *Ante*, ch.
1x. § 76.

the levy was ordered to be taken from the first ban of the National Guard of 1812, a hundred thousand from the classes liable to conscription in the four preceding years, and no less than a hundred and fifty thousand from those arriving at the legal age in 1814 ; that is, who were then only from eighteen to nineteen years of age.

The multiplied disasters of the Moscow campaign made the Emperor feel the necessity of at length bringing to an accommodation his long-continued difference with the Holy See. With one-half of Europe openly in arms against him, and the other but doubtfully arrayed under his banners, he could no longer afford to brave the hostility of the head of the Church. It has been already mentioned,¹ that after the violent seizure of the Pope by the officers, and with the consent of Napoleon, and his passage of the Alps in July 1809, he was brought to Grenoble ; from thence he was shortly after transferred to Savona, where he was rigorously treated, and forcibly severed from the society of all those, among the cardinals or their servants, who were suspected of being hostile to the interests of France.* As this situation was not deemed sufficiently secure after the Emperor had departed from Paris on the Moscow campaign, he was at that time removed to Fontainebleau, where he was kept a prisoner, indeed, but in a more dignified and respectable captivity. Though a prisoner, he had a handsome suite of apart-

* The following is an instance of the treatment to which the Pope was subjected. He had issued, in November and December 1810, three briefs on the subject of the institution of ecclesiastics to bishoprics in the French empire without the sanction of the Holy See. Napoleon was irritated beyond measure at this resistance to his authority, especially from a captive, and he gave vent to his indignation in measures of the utmost severity. Cardinals Pietro, Gabrielli, and Opozzoni, were immediately conveyed from Samur, which had been assigned as the place of their detention, to the Castle of Vincennes ; the intrepid Bishop of Gregorio, and Fontaria, the chief of the Barnabites, the principal ornaments of the Church, were immured in the same prison ; the Bishop Doria, who had hitherto constantly been in attendance on his holiness, was sent to Naples ; and many of his most faithful servants were made to share the captivity of Cardinal Pacca in the Castle of Fenestrelles, amidst the snows of the Savoy Alps. No one was permitted to visit the Pope without the authority of the prefect of the department. he was interdicted in the

ments, was comfortably entertained at table, and permitted to walk in the gardens of the palace, although he was still debarred from the society of his most esteemed attendants, lest they should encourage him in his resistance to the imperial authority. His occupations here were of the meanest description : age and long-protracted confinement appear to have in a great degree weakened his mind ; and the hands of the supreme Pontiff were not unfrequently engaged in the humble occupation of darning a stocking or hemming a garment.¹

In bringing the Pope so near to the French capital, and so studiously removing from him all those who were suspected of being of an independent temper, or hostile to the imperial interests, Napoleon was not actuated merely by the spirit of oppression, or jealousy of a rival and inflexible authority. He had great views, which were well matured, on the subject of the Holy See—its more intimate connexion with the French government—the influence which he might acquire over its members, and the more extended base on which, by such means, he might establish his own power. He not only had no jealousy, but he cordially approved of every institution which tended to bring the minds of men into a state of due subjection to constituted authority : all he required was, that these institutions should be placed under his own immediate influence and con-

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1812.

¹ Sav. vi.
49, 50. Ar-
taud, ii. 302,
313. Pacca,
Mem. ii. 37,
39.

53.
Napoleon's
hidden de-
signs regard-
ing the
Pope and
the Catho-
lic church.

most rigorous manner from any communication with his subjects in Italy, accompanied with a threat of a public trial and deposition in the event of contumacy. The state-prisons of France were filled with a crowd of ecclesiastics who offered resistance to the violent encroachments of Napoleon on the jurisdiction of the Holy See ; and to such contemptible shifts was the imperial government reduced to break the courageous spirit of the captive pontiff, that not only were his whole papers seized, and many carried off, one day when he was absent from home, walking in his little garden with Berthier, the governor of his establishment ; but he received intimation that the whole household, including himself, were to be put on the reduced allowance of five paoli (*two shillings and twopence*) a-day—a measure of severity, however, which was only carried into execution for two weeks, as it was found that the good Catholics of Savona supplied the deficiency of the imperial treasury by themselves furnishing to the pontiff provisions in abundance.—See ARTAUD, *Hist. de Pape Pie VII.* ii. 289 ; and CARDINAL PACCA, ii. 37.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1812.

trol.* With this view, he meditated the translation of the papal government to Paris, the extinction of its temporal dominion, its entire dependence on the French empire for revenue, and the consequent subjection of its chief to his own control; but, having effected this, he had no wish to impair its spiritual authority; on the contrary, he was rather desirous to extend it. Like the Roman emperor, he was anxious to found his own authority not merely on temporal power, but religious influences; to adorn his brows not only with the diadem of the conqueror, but the tiara of the pontiff; and as the forms of the Church prevented the actual union of both offices in his own person, he conceived that the next best system would be to have the Pope so situated that he should be irrevocably subjected to his control. Napoleon says, "He wished to establish the spiritual authority of the Pope in France: he neither wished to profit by accidental circumstances, to create a patriarchship, nor to alter the belief of his people; he respected spiritual affairs, and wished to rule them without touching them, or mingling in their concerns: he wished to make them pliant to his will, but by the intervention only of temporal influences."¹ There were persons at Rome who saw through his policy. They said, "It is his mode of carrying on war: not daring to assault it in front, he has turned the Church as he turned the Alps in 1796, or Melas in 1800."

¹ Napoleon in Montholon, i. 159.

For this end, he relied entirely on the judgment of the Bishop of Nantes; whenever that learned prelate said,

* "Don't be alarmed, bishop," said Napoleon to the Bishop of Nantes; "the policy of my government is intimately bound up with the maintenance of the spiritual authority of the Pope. I require that he should be more powerful than ever: he will never have as much influence as my policy requires he should possess." The bishop was astonished, and seemed to doubt the sincerity of the Emperor, but he spoke his real opinion. By transferring the seat of the papal government to Paris, he expected to acquire the entire direction of this formidable power; and he would willingly have augmented the awful character of the thunder of the Vatican, when he held in his own hands the means of directing its bolts.—See NAPOLEON in MONTHOLON, i. 161.

“That attacks the Catholics and the Church,” he paused in his career. He felt assured of ultimate success, with the aid of time and the vast influence which he possessed. “In 1813,” said Napoleon, “but for the events in Russia, the Pope would have been Bishop of Rome and of Paris, and lodged at the archbishopric of the latter city; the sacred college, the penitentiary, the office of propaganda, the archives, would have been around Notre-Dame, and in the Isle of St Louis. Rome would have been in the ancient Lutetia. The establishment of the court of Rome at Paris would have been fruitful in great political results; its influence on Spain, Italy, the Rhenish Confederacy, and Poland, would have drawn closer the bonds of the Great Nation; and that which the chief of the Church had over the faithful in England, Ireland, Russia, Prussia, Hungary, and Bohemia, would have passed into the hands of the Emperor of France.” So impressed was he with these ideas, and the immense addition to his influence which the papal authority would have given him, that he would have done everything in his power to extend the Romish propagandism, the foreign missions, and to increase the power of the clergy. Already he had established the cardinals as the chiefs of the state; they took precedence at the Tuileries of all the world; the whole dependants of the pontifical court were to have been magnificently endowed, so as to give them no cause to regret their past existence. “It was with this view, as he himself has told us, that the Emperor was unceasingly occupied with the amelioration and embellishment of Paris. He was so, not merely from the love of the arts, but in consequence of his system of government. It required that Paris should be an unique city—above all comparison with other capitals; the *chefs-d’œuvre* of science and art, the finest museums, all that had adorned and rendered illustrious former ages, should be there assembled; that the churches, the palaces, the theatres, should be beyond any elsewhere in existence.¹ Napoleon

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1812.

54.

His plans
for making
Paris the
head of the
church.¹ Napoleon
in Month.
i. 161, 162.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1812.

regretted only that he could not transport to it the church of St Peter's at Rome. He was mortified with the bad taste of Notre-Dame."

55.

Commence-
ment of the
conferences
with the
Pope at
Fontaine-
bleau.

But the disasters of the Russian campaign cut short these splendid projects, and awakened the Emperor to the necessity of immediately, and at all hazards, depriving his enemies of the powerful subject of invective which arose from his contention with, and open imprisonment of, the head of the Church. Within a fortnight after his arrival at Paris, he commenced the attempt by sending to congratulate his holiness on the beginning of the year; Cardinal Doria was despatched from Fontainebleau,

Jan. 1, 1813.

to return the compliment. This led to an interchange of civilities, and the renewal of the negotiations between the two courts. The Bishop of Nantes was intrusted with its direction on the part of Napoleon, and the Cardinals Doria and Dugnani on that of the Pope. When the negotiations were deemed sufficiently advanced to render the personal presence of the Emperor desirable, he appeared suddenly at Fontainebleau with the Empress Marie-Louise, and immediately hastened to the apartments of the captive pontiff. Appearing to forget altogether that there had been any difference between them, he immediately embraced him, and, without touching on matters of business, spent the remainder of the evening in the most agreeable and varied conversation.

Jan. 19.

No man possessed the art of fascination, when he chose to exert it, in a higher degree than Napoleon, or was more capable of dazzling the minds of his hearers by the charms of a seductive and entrancing discourse. If these powers had acquired the mastery at Tilsit of a young and able Czar in the plenitude of his power, it is not surprising that they proved more than a match at Fontainebleau for an aged Pontiff, whose intellectual faculties had been weakened by a long captivity and protracted misfortunes.¹ No violence was either required or employed; the Pope and his attendants, charmed with this unexpected

¹ Thib. ix. 197, 198. Pacca, ii. 81, 85. Artaud, ii. 315, 321.

change in their fortunes, speedily fell into the snare which was so skilfully decked with flowers ; and, six days after his arrival, the Emperor had the satisfaction of seeing the signature of his holiness to a concordat, which settled the principal points in dispute between the court of the Tuileries and the Holy See.*

CHAP.
LXXIV.
1812.

By this celebrated instrument it was provided, 1. That the Pope shall exercise his pontifical functions in France and the kingdom of Italy, in like manner as his predecessors have done. 2. His ambassadors, ministers, and chargés-d'affaires, shall enjoy the same immunities and privileges as the members of the diplomatic body. 3. The domains of his holiness, as yet unalienated, shall be exempted from all sorts of taxes ; those already alienated shall be replaced till their revenue amounts to two millions of francs, (£80,000.) 4. In the six months which shall follow the notification of a nomination of a bishop by the Emperor, the Pope shall give the necessary induction to the bishopric. In the event of no such induction being given by his holiness during that period, the archbishop of the district, whom failing, the senior bishop within its limits, shall proceed to give the necessary induction, so that in no event shall any bishopric be vacant more than a year. 5. The Pope shall appoint, both in France and Italy, to certain sees, to be afterwards fixed upon by the contracting parties. 6. The six suburban dioceses shall be restored, and put at the disposal of his holiness. 7. The holy father, in regard to bishoprics in the Roman states, from which the incumbents are absent by the force of circumstances, shall exercise his right of nomination *in partibus*. 8. The Emperor

56.
Articles of
the Concor-
dat.

* "Chateaubriand has alleged, in his celebrated pamphlet of 'Bonaparte and the Bourbons,' that Napoleon, in a transport of rage, seized the Pope by the locks, and maltreated him grievously. But the Pope, often interrogated on that subject, invariably answered that it was not true ; nevertheless it was easy to perceive, from the strain of the Emperor's conversations which he repeated, that he had assumed a high tone with him, and even went so far as to tell him he was not adequately versed in ecclesiastical matters."—*Mémoires du CARDINAL PACCA*, ii. 87. Jan. 25.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1812.

and Pope shall concert measures, at the proper time, for the reduction of the bishoprics in Tuscany and the Genoese states, as well as for those to be established in Holland and the Hanseatic departments. 9. The offices of propagandism, of the penitentiary, and the archives, shall be established in the residence of the holy father. 10. The Emperor awards a free pardon to the cardinals, bishops, priests, and laity, who have incurred penalties from past events. 11. His holiness consents to these conditions, from the confidence which he has in the good dispositions of his majesty to the numerous wants of the Church in the time in which we live.¹

¹ See the Concordat in Martens, Sup. i. 552; and in Artaud, ii. 323.

57.

Extraordinary joy of Napoleon at the conclusion of this treaty.

The Emperor testified, as well he might, the most extraordinary satisfaction at the conclusion of this concordat, which not only tacitly ceded to him the whole ecclesiastical states in Italy, by stipulating nothing for their restitution, but in effect decided in favour of the civil power in France the long-disputed question as to the ecclesiastical *veto* on the appointment of bishops by the temporal authority. Next morning, decorations, presents, and orders were profusely scattered among the chief persons of the Pope's household; the joyful intelligence was communicated to all the bishops; *Te Deum* was chanted in all the churches of France; all the restrictions upon the personal freedom of the Pope were removed; mass was allowed to be freely celebrated in the palace of Fontainebleau; a numerous body of cardinals soon after joined his holiness from their different places of exile; the concordat was solemnly published as one of the fundamental laws of the state; the Emperor loaded the Pope and all the members of his court, with that gracious and insinuating kindness, which, when it suited his purposes, he could so well assume; and, in the exuberance of his satisfaction, even gave orders for the liberation of his indomitable antagonist, Cardinal Pacca, from his long and painful confinement amidst the snows of Savoy.²

² Thib. ix. 199. Artaud, ii. 325, 326. Pacca, ii. 87, 88.

But while Napoleon was thus flattering himself that he had surmounted all his difficulties in this interesting particular, and that the whole weight of the Church would be thrown into the scale in his favour, a great and important revulsion was going forward in the papal cabinet. The able members of the ecclesiastical body who returned to Fontainebleau at once perceived that the Pope had been overreached in the transaction ; that the penetration of an old man had been blinded by the specious arguments of the Emperor, and his firmness shaken by the rigours of a protracted confinement ; and that at the very moment when the fortunes of Napoleon had begun to hang doubtful in the balance, he had had the address to elicit from his august captive greater advantages than he could ever have hoped for in the plenitude of his power. Shortly after the concordat was signed, the Pope repented of the step he had taken ; and his grief was so profound, that when Cardinal Pacca arrived, he was strongly affected by his haggard and emaciated appearance. To the expressions of admiration uttered by the cardinal upon the constancy with which he had borne his long captivity, the frail pontiff replied—"But we have dishonoured ourselves at its close : these cardinals drew me to the table, and forced me to sign it." It was long and anxiously debated in the secret councils of the Church at Fontainebleau, what course should be adopted in this emergency ; and at length it was determined that the Pope should solemnly retract his signature to the concordat, in a letter to the Emperor, and ascribe his acquiescence to the weakness of the flesh.* Such a letter was in secret prepared by the aged pontiff, in terms suited to the solemnity of the occasion. Without attempting to exculpate his

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

58.

Rapid
change in
the opinion
of the Pope
and his
council.

* "I extorted from the Pope," said Napoleon, "by the single force of my private conversation, that famous concordat of Fontainebleau, by which he renounced the temporal power of the Papacy. He had no sooner signed it than he repented of what he had done. On the day following, he was to have dined in public with me, but he feigned sickness, and did not appear. Immediately after I quitted him, he fell into the hands of his old councillors, who

CHAP.
LXXXIV.

1813.
March 24.

¹ Pacca, ii.
87, 124.
Artaud, ii.
34, 330,
347.

59.

Moderate
and prudent
conduct of
Napoleon
on this re-
traction.
March 25.

weakness, or palliate his fault, he confessed its enormity, and implored the Divine forgiveness; and at the same time fully and unequivocally retracted his consent to the concordat. No sooner was his resolution taken, than he recovered all his wonted serenity of mind and cheerfulness of manner, though both he and the whole conclave fully expected some act of extreme violence from the ebullitions of the Emperor's wrath.¹*

In these expectations, however, the Pope and his councillors were in a great degree disappointed. Though mortally offended, Napoleon took the more prudent course of dissembling his wrath. He did not deem it advisable to push matters to extremities with the church, when he was so soon to have Europe on his hands upon the Rhine. Feigning, therefore, to disregard entirely this untimely retraction, he acted, and not without reason on his side, as if the matter were irrevocably concluded. On the very day after he had received the Pope's letter, he published the concordat as a law obligatory on all archbishops, bishops, and chapters; cognisance of all cases known by the name of "appeals on abuses," hitherto confined to the ecclesiastical tribunals, as well as of all delinquencies arising from the infractions of the concordat, was committed to the ordinary courts of the empire: and the "grand judge" was directed to draw up a form of process for such questions. At the same time, an entire amnesty was proclaimed to all individuals of the departments of Rome and Trasymene, who had incurred

made him retract all he had done. If we had been left alone, I would have made him do whatever I pleased. He was truly a lamb; a really good man, whom I esteemed and loved, and who regarded me, I am well assured, in some degree, with similar sentiments."—*LAS CASES*, v. 334, 335.

* "As we have done wrong," said the Pope, in this touching manifesto, "we will imitate our illustrious predecessor Pascal II. in 1117; we confess we have done wrong, and, with the aid of the Lord, we desire that our act should be altogether annulled, in order that no damage may thence arise to the church, or injury to our own soul. The concession made in one of these articles is unjustifiable in the sight of God and man. What regulation can be admitted which infringes so deeply on the original constitution of the church of Jesus Christ, who established the primacy of St Peter and his successors, as that

civil penalties by refusing to take the oath of allegiance to the Emperor, provided they did so within thirty-five days; and the latter promoted to the rank of senators the Cardinal Bayonne, and Bourlier, bishop of Evreux, who had been mainly instrumental in bringing about the concordat. The only act of severity on Napoleon's part, which followed the Pope's change of measures, was the removal from Fontainebleau of Cardinal Pietro, who was seized early in April, and conducted to Auxonne, where he remained in detention till the fall of Napoleon. At first, the Emperor was inclined to measures of rigour when he heard of the retractation, and he said in the council of state held on the subject at Paris, "If I do not cut off the heads of some of those priests at Fontainebleau, I shall never settle the affair." Councillors were not wanting who urged him, like Henry VIII., to break altogether with the See of Rome, and declare himself the head of the Church: but, on reflection, his better judgment prevailed, and he replied in homely but expressive words, "No: that would be to break our own windows."¹

It was from no apprehension of any revulsion in France itself against such a final rupture with the Church, that Napoleon, on this important occasion, was so guarded and lenient in his measures towards the ecclesiastics at Fontainebleau. It was by a well-founded dread of the effect it would produce in foreign nations, especially Spain, Italy, and the southern states of Ger-

CHAP.
LXXXIV.
1812.

¹ Artaud, ii.
343, 355.
Pacca, ii.
109, 136.
Thib. ix.
200, 201.

60.
His reasons
for this moderation.

which subjects our power to that of a metropolitan, and permits him to give induction to bishops named, whom the supreme pontiff, in his wisdom, has deemed unworthy of induction?—rendering thus judge of the head of the church an inferior functionary, beneath him in the hierarchy, and himself subjected to his authority."—PRUS VII. to NAPOLEON, *24th March* 1813; ARTAUD, ii. 342.—The reflecting reader, aware how exactly identical are the effects of similar passions and interests upon mind, in all ages and circumstances of the world, will compare this violent collision of the civil government in France with the papal power, during the reign of Napoleon, with the parallel contest between Thomas-à-Becket and Henry II. in the early days of English history; and the conflict of the rights of patrons with the democratic pretensions of the church, and a portion of the laity, in Scotland in 1840.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

many, that his conduct was influenced. In France, religious impressions of all sorts had been so completely obliterated by the cessation of public worship and instruction during the Revolution, and the growing up of a generation ignorant of the very elements of belief, that the dispute with the Pope excited very little attention, and the authority of the church of Rome might with ease have been thrown off at that period. Except in a few old women and devout ecclesiastics, indifference in regard to religion was general among all classes, at least in the urban and influential population. The churches, little frequented by any, were seldom entered except by females; labour, buying and selling, proceeded on Sundays and fast-days as on other days: the sacraments of the church, even at the entrance or the close of life, were rarely sought after. Fatal effects of a revolution! To extinguish the only durable bond which can hold men together, by voluntary union, during the agitations of an ancient and corrupted society; to destroy the basis of self-government, by weakening the strength of the moral restraints which can alone supply the place of those of force; and render liberty impossible, by leaving in the ruling classes of the state no power which can repress the sallies of wickedness, except that of the sword.¹

Pacca, ii.
142. Thib.
ix. 201, 202.

61.
Napoleon's
speech to
the legisla-
tive body.

But other cares than these disputes with the Church now occupied the Emperor, and preparations were necessary for a graver contest than that with a captive pontiff and his enthralled cardinals. Russia was approaching; Prussia was preparing to shake off the yoke; the fermentation in Germany presaged an awful contest on the Rhine. Napoleon prepared to meet it with a gravity, resolution, and candour, which are worthy of the highest admiration. The legislative body met early in February, and the speech of the Emperor made no attempt to disguise the losses of the Moscow campaign, or the imminence of the present dangers. "Success the most brilliant," said he, "in the first instance, attended our arms;

but the excessive rigours and premature approach of winter brought frightful calamities on the army. In a few nights I beheld everything changed. I have experienced great losses ; they would have broken my heart, if in such circumstances I could have been alive to any other considerations but the interest, the glory, and the future destiny of my people. The agents of Great Britain spread among all our neighbours the spirit of revolt against their sovereigns. England would wish the entire Continent to become a prey to the horrors of civil war ; but Providence has determined that she shall be the first victim of the passions she would spread among others. The joy of our enemies, and, above all, of England, has reached its height : but misfortunes have proved the strength of the empire : the energy of my people have brought them back to a more just appreciation of things. My differences with the Pope have been happily terminated by a concordat : the French dynasty reigns, and shall reign, in Spain. I desire peace—it is necessary. On four different occasions, since the rupture of the peace of Amiens, I have solemnly made offer of it to my enemies ; but I will never conclude a treaty save on terms honourable and suitable to the grandeur and interests of my empire.”¹

CHAP.
LXXIV.
1813.
Feb. 14.

¹ Moniteur,
Feb. 14,
1813. Thib.
ix. 204, 205.

This ingenuous and intrepid address was accompanied by such a detail of the statistical and financial situation of the empire, as almost justified the confident tone of the Emperor, notwithstanding the disasters of the Russian retreat. According to the *exposé* published by M. Montalivet, minister of the interior, the population of that part of the empire which embraced the territory of Old France, was twenty-eight million seven hundred thousand souls : an amount not materially different from what it was supposed to have been at the commencement of the Revolution ;* a remarkable result, when

62.
Important
statistical
details with
which it was
accom-
panied.

* It was then estimated at twenty-five millions ; but no correct enumeration of the inhabitants had been made, and there was reason to believe that this

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

the vast consumption of human life which had since taken place, from the internal bloodshed and external wars of the Revolution, is taken into consideration. It scarcely, however, warranted the assertion of Montalivet, singularly ill-timed amidst the universal mourning produced by the Moscow retreat, that "the conscription itself, which every year made the *élite* of the youth rally round the standards of the empire, had contributed to the increase of the population, by multiplying the number of marriages, and favouring them, because it fixed for ever the lot of the young Frenchman who had obeyed the law on this subject." It *had* fixed their lot, it was universally observed—for it had consigned them to their graves. In other respects, however, the report exhibited a more gratifying and less questionable picture of the growing wealth and increased productions of the empire: and the details are curious and interesting, as presenting a singular example of the extent to which a great expenditure by government, accompanied by a strong internal administration, a tolerable protection to property, and the stoppage of external competition, can increase the industry of a country, even in the midst of the most unbounded system of foreign hostility.^{1*}

¹ Thib. ix.
205, 206.
Moniteur,
Feb. 15,
1818.

63.
Surprising
magnitude
of the sums
expended by
Napoleon
on public
improvements.

In one particular, the report of the minister of the interior contained authentic details, on a subject in which the government of Napoleon is worthy of universal imitation. It appeared, that during the twelve years which had elapsed since he ascended the consular throne, the sums expended on public improvements, such as roads, bridges, fortifications, harbours, public edifices, &c., amounted to the enormous sum of a thousand millions of francs, or £40,000,000, of which seven hundred millions, or £28,000,000, was the proportion belonging

supposition was considerably below the real numbers of the people, as their numbers had been concealed from the authorities, from a dread of military requisitions.

* See Appendix, A, Chap. LXXIV.

to Old France. When it is recollected that an expenditure so vast, on objects so truly imperial, amounting to nearly £3,500,000 a-year, took place during a period of extraordinary warlike exertion, and almost unbroken maritime and territorial hostility, it must be confessed, that it demonstrates an elevation of mind and grandeur of conception, on the part of Napoleon, which, as much as his wonderful military achievements, mark him as one of the most marvellous of mankind. It would be deserving of unqualified admiration, were it not deeply sullied by the recollection, that sums so vast could be drawn from the imperial treasury only because nearly half the expenses of government were laid on the conquered or allied states; that it was the maintenance of three hundred thousand French veterans in Spain at the expense of the wretched people of the Peninsula, and of two hundred thousand in Germany at the cost of the impoverished inhabitants of Prussia, which alone enabled the Emperor to direct so considerable a portion of his revenue to the internal improvement of his dominions; and that France was embellished by works of utility and magnificence, and Paris adorned with the splendour of decoration, because woe unheard-of desolated the Peninsula, and oppression unbearable had roused an unconquerable spirit of revenge in the German provinces.^{1*}

CHAP.
LXXIV.
1813.

¹ See reports in Fain's *Camp. de 1813*, i. 80, 81; and Goldsmith, *Recueil*, vi. 77; and *Moniteur*, Feb. 15, 1813.

In another particular, unconnected with military or political events, but deeply interesting to the lovers of the fine arts, this report contains details of the utmost

* The expenditure from 1800 to 1812 was thus classified in the report of M. Montalivet :—

Imperial palaces, . . .	62,000,000 francs, or	£2,480,000
Fortifications, . . .	144,000,000	— 5,760,000
Maritime harbours, . . .	117,000,000	— 4,680,000
Roads, . . .	277,000,000	— 11,080,000
Bridges, . . .	31,000,000	— 1,240,000
Canals and draining, . . .	123,000,000	— 4,920,000
Embellishment of Paris, . . .	102,000,000	— 4,080,000
Public buildings in the provinces, . . .	149,000,000	— 5,960,000

Total, 1,005,000,000 £40,200,000

—GOLDSMITH'S *Recueil des Traités, Actes, &c., de Napoléon*, vi. 100.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

64.

Cost of the
public
edifices at
Paris.

value. The cost of all the public edifices in Paris, as well as of the great roads over the Alps, and the noble harbours constructed by Napoleon at Antwerp, Cherbourg, and other places, is given so far as actually expended, with the estimates of the total cost to bring them to completion. To the traveller who recollects the unbounded admiration which these public works and edifices have awakened in his mind, it is an object of interest to ascertain the expense which they have severally occasioned; and he will find with surprise that they have in great part been reared by an outlay, not exceeding that of edifices of little or no excellence in his own country; even although the charges of building are not materially different in the two countries. So true it is, that the most essential elements in architectural beauty — genius and taste in the architect — are beyond the power of mere wealth to command; that it is not money to construct beautiful buildings, but the mind to conceive them, which is generally wanting; and that it is to the pure taste and noble conceptions of the artists of southern Europe, since the construction of Gothic cathedrals in the north has ceased, rather than any greater excellence in the materials at their command, or the larger amount of wealth of which they have the disposal, that the remarkable superiority of their works to those of this country is to be ascribed.*

65.

Finances of
the French
empire at
this period.

The financial and military resources which this memorable report unfolded as being still at the disposal of the French government, were immense, and strongly indicated the magnitude of the colossus which combined Europe had yet to combat, even after the great armament of 1812 had been swept away. The estimated revenue of 1812 of the whole French empire was 1,030,000,000 francs, or £41,200,000; and the sum actually realised, 992,000,000 francs, or £39,680,000. The expenditure, so far as drawn from the French treasury, had been 980,000,000 francs,

* See Appendix, B, Chap. LXXIV.

or £39,200,000 ; but, as already more than once observed, no opinion can be formed of the real cost of Napoleon's government at this period, or for six years before, as at least half of the French army was laid as a burden for all its expenses, including food, clothing, pay, and lodging, on the countries in the Peninsula, Germany, or Italy, which it occupied. For this reason, a very large sum, probably nearly a half of this ample revenue, must be added to it as drawn from the contributions on the allied or conquered states. Of the enormous and almost incredible amount of these contributions, ample details have already been given, and more will occur to be detailed in the course of this work.^{1*}

CHAP.
LXXIV.
1813.

¹ Report by
Montalivet,
Feb. 25,
1813. Gold-
smith, vii.
144, 145.

With respect to the military and naval resources of Napoleon's dominions, the report contained information that could more implicitly be relied on. The population of the French empire, augmented as it now was by Belgium, Holland, the Hanse Towns, and the Roman states, amounted to forty-two millions, of which twenty-eight millions seven hundred thousand belonged to Old France. Nor were the military and naval resources of the empire on a scale inferior to the numerical amount of its inhabitants ; on the contrary, their proportion was excessive as compared to these. The horses it contained were three millions and a half, consuming as much food as thirty millions of people. The army numbered in all eight hundred thousand infantry, a hundred thousand cavalry, and a hundred thousand artillerymen and engineers ; in all, a million of men in arms : †

66.
Military
strength of
the empire.

* See Appendix, C, Chap. LXXIV.

† This force was thus distributed :—

20 regiments of the Guard,	. . .	60,000	men.
152 ————— of infantry,	. . .	640,000	—
37 ————— of light infantry,	. . .	84,000	—
15 ————— of artillery,	. . .	68,000	—
30 battalions of waggon train and heavy artillery,	. . .	32,000	—
80 regiments of cavalry,	. . .	100,000	—
15 foreign battalions,	. . .	12,000	—

—FAIN, i. 93.

Total, . . . 996,000 —

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

a force, if the quality as well as number of the combatants, and their admirable state of equipment, are taken into consideration, unparalleled in any former age or country in the world. But it was altogether disproportioned to the resources, vast as they were, of the state : it was more than double that which Rome, at its highest point of elevation, maintained out of three times the number of inhabitants, and larger than China supports with a territory ten times, and a population, according to the lowest estimate, five times, as large as those of the French empire. In a word, it implied the permanent absorption of one in forty of the whole population in the profession of arms ; whereas it has never been found by experience that an empire, how powerful soever, can for any length of time flourish with more than one in a hundred engaged in such pursuits.*

67.
And of its
navy.

Notwithstanding the great losses which the French marine had sustained since the commencement of the Revolutionary war, it had again, by the indefatigable exertions of Napoleon, been raised to a most formidable state ; such a state, indeed, as clearly indicated the perseverance of the Emperor in his grand design of ultimately combating England hand to hand on her own element, and terminating the war, in his own words, by a battle of Actium. From fifteen to twenty ships of the line had for several years past been launched annually at the dockyards of Antwerp, Brest, Cherbourg, Toulon, Flushing, Genoa, and Venice ; and the naval force of the empire had by this means been increased to one hundred and four ships of the line and fifty frigates. As the commercial navy of France was entirely ruined,

* Rome, in the time of Augustus, with a population of 120,000,000, had an army of 450,000 ; Russia at present, with 60,000,000, has 710,000 in arms ; China, with 330,000,000, a nominal force of 914,000 ; but more than half of this immense body are mere militia, like the Prussian *landwehr*, who are only occasionally embodied, and are not permanently withdrawn from the labours of agriculture.—See GIBBON'S *Rome*, chap. i. ; BALBI'S *Géographie Universelle*, 637, and 822.

this large fleet was manned by means of the maritime conscription, which, levied in the principal marine departments of the empire, furnished annually twenty thousand recruits for the sea service. They were sedulously trained to their duties in the roadsteads and harbours of the principal seaports ; by which means nearly a hundred thousand sailors were constantly maintained in the service of the state.¹

Though it was, doubtless, but a slight apprenticeship to the duties of seamanship which could thus be learned, yet the perseverance of the Emperor in this great design of gradually raising up his navy to a level with that of England, and avoiding all encounters till this was done, marks the decision and energy of his character, and indicates the serious nature of the ultimate struggle which awaited the British empire, if the prosecution of this project had not been interrupted by the disasters which occasioned his fall. And though England, with a fleet of two hundred and forty sail of the line, and eight hundred frigates and smaller vessels which at that period bore the royal flag,² might well disregard even these considerable efforts, yet experience has proved that, with a popular constitution, no permanent reliance can be placed on the dominant multitude possessing foresight and self-denial sufficient to keep up a naval force adequate to the exigencies of so vast an empire. And it will, probably, not be deemed by future ages the least remarkable facts of the fifty eventful years which followed the French Revolution, or the least characteristic of the influence of government on the national fortunes, that while the navy of France, despite the multiplied and unceasing disasters of the war, was increased by the vigour of the executive from eighty-two ships of the line at its commencement,³ to one hundred and four at its termination ; and while that of England rose, amidst her gigantic expenditure, during the same period, from one hundred and fifty-four at the first epoch, to two hundred and forty-four at the last,⁴ it sank during the twenty-five years of unbroken

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

¹ Fain,
Guerre de
1813, i. 95.

68.
Dangers
with which
it threatened
the British
islands.

² Balbi's
Géog. Univ.
633. James's
Naval His-
tory, vol. vi.
App. No. 4.

³ *Ante*, ch.
ii. § 8.

⁴ James's
Naval His-
tory, i. 404;
and vi. 511.
Barrow's
Life of
Anson, App.
424.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

¹ *Ante*, ch.
lxii, § 74.69.
Remarkable
failure of
the powers
of the con-
scription at
this period.² *Sav.* vii.
237, 239.70.
Reason of
this circum-
stance.

peace and unparalleled commercial prosperity which followed the termination of hostilities, to *ninety* ships of the line, or little more than a *third* of its former number ; though the amount of the British trade, and the necessities of the British colonial empire, had, during the same period, more than doubled.¹

But while the physical resources of France were thus immense, and while such was the energy with which they were wielded by its chief, there was one appalling source of weakness, hitherto little attended to, lurking in its bosom, of which the effects now fell with decisive force upon the wasted realm. Notwithstanding the prodigious consumption of men, which had taken place during the wars of the Revolution, it had not hitherto been found that the conscription was materially less productive in filling the ranks than it had formerly been ; and the French government, not aware of the reason of this remarkable circumstance, flattered themselves that the powers of population in the empire were literally inexhaustible. But about this time, a new and alarming deficiency was observed in the produce of the Emperor's levies ; and for the first time since the commencement of the war, the number of young men whom the conscription could rally round the imperial standards, proved not a half of that on which the minister of war, on apparently authentic data, had calculated, and which the experience of former years justified him in expecting. This evil went on increasing to such a degree, that before the war terminated, the levies ordered by the senate were little more than nominal ; and it became apparent that the powers of life in the class from which the conscription was drawn, had been exhausted.²

The reason, though not apparent at first sight, when once stated is quite satisfactory. By Napoleon's uniform system, the conscription of each year was taken from the male population who in the course of it attained a certain age, which varied from twenty-one in his earlier years to

eighteen in his last. As long, therefore, as the levy fell on the class who were born before the war commenced, a fresh and undiminished harvest was yearly offered to the scythe of the conscription. But in 1811 and 1812, the young men who were conceived in 1793 became for the first time liable to be drawn, and then the effect of the immense conscription of twelve hundred thousand men in that year, and the vast consumption of life occasioned by its bloody campaign, was rendered apparent. The conscription suddenly became unproductive to an alarming degree ; the destruction of the former generations told at once, with fearful force, upon the numbers of the present ; for the levy had reached those youths who should have been begotten in the year when the first dreadful chasm in the population had taken place. The military strength of the empire was nearly exhausted ; but the effect of this was not rendered conspicuous, as superficial observers would have supposed, in the absence of men for the cultivation of the fields, for they were still found in sufficient numbers in the elder part of the male population born before 1793. It appeared in the experienced necessity of bringing the conscription down to persons of younger years and inferior stature, wholly unable to bear the fatigues of a campaign. Hence the practice, so usual in the latter years of the empire, of levying the conscription, not on those who arrived at the age of liability in the year when it was ordered, but who would arrive at it in *two or three years after* ; that is, of anticipating the human supplies of future years, and assembling round the standards boys of seventeen or eighteen years of age, who, before six weeks were over, for the most part whitened the fields with their bones, or encumbered the hospitals with their diseases. Unnoticed by ordinary observers, this circumstance had a material, and, in the end, a decisive effect upon the fortunes of the war ;¹ and it affords an interesting example of the way in which vaulting ambition overleaps

¹ Sav. vii.
246, 247.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

itself, and of the impassable barrier opposed by nature to its further progress, if it should survive the generation in which it arose, and dip into the future races of mankind.

71.
Diminution
in the age
and standard
of height as
the Revolution-
ary wars
advanced.

In another particular the effect of the continued drain of the conscription on the French population, was evinced in a matter equally curious and decisive. As the wars of the Revolution advanced, and the conscription reached the children of the generation of whom the most robust and vigorous had perished in the earlier campaigns, not only did it become necessary to fix the levy on young men of more tender years, but to lower the standard of height at which those drawn would be admitted into the ranks. In 1804 the levy was from those who had attained the age of from twenty years and three months, to twenty-one and three months; but in 1810 it was found no longer possible to restrict the levy to those who had attained this comparatively advanced age; and it was enforced against those who were from eighteen to nineteen. The same age continued to 1813 and 1814, when it was practically brought closer to seventeen than eighteen, by the conscription being levied on those who attained the legal age in the succeeding year.* Nor was this all: the same necessity compelled the government to lower the standard of height for admission into the army; and so low did it latterly descend, that in 1810 it was reduced to five feet two, and in 1813 it had sunk to little

* The way in which this was done, was by authorising a conscription of those who should attain the legal age in the succeeding years to that in which the levy took place. Thus, the conscription of 1813 was allocated as follows:—

1. 350,000 men drawn from the conscription of 1812 and 1813, and from 1810 to 1813.
2. 180,000 men drawn from the conscription of 1814.
3. 120,000 from that of 1814.
160,000 from that of 1815.
4. 300,000 from that of 1811 to 1815.

—See *Senatus-Consultum*, 11th January 1813, 3d April 1813, 10th October 1813, and 15th November 1813. *Moniteur*; and GOLDSMITH'S *Recueil*, vi. 19-24, 271, 517, and 546.

more than five feet one inch.* The evil thus existing was not confined to a single generation ; it trenched deep upon the hopes and the strength of the next. The children of the diminutive parents who survived the bloody wars of Napoleon, inherited the weakness of those from whom they sprang ; and the appalling fact, that from 1825 to 1833, nearly *one-half* of the persons drawn or recruited for the army, were rejected from *smallness of stature or physical defects*, though the standard was only five feet two inches, demonstrates how fearfully the dreadful wars from 1805 to 1813, when they were born, had operated on the vigour and population of the French empire.[†] /

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

¹ Essai sur
la Stat. de
la Popula-
tion Fran-
çaise, par le
Comte
d'Ange-
ville, 74,
79.

The extraordinary losses of the campaign of 1812, great as they had been, were materially aggravated by an accidental circumstance. A severe frost set in over all Europe on the 29th December 1812, and continued, without intermission, till the first week in March. In the north of Germany the cold was peculiarly intense :

72.
Great losses
of the
French in
military
stores in
Prussia.

* The following table indicates the progressive lowering of the standard of height for the French army during the continuance and from the effects of the wars of the Revolution :—

				Minimum height of Conscripts.			
				Metres.	Feet.	Inch.	English.
From 1799 to 1803	.	.	.	1.598	or	5	3
In 1804	.	.	.	1.544	or	5	0 $\frac{3}{4}$
1818	.	.	.	1.570	or	5	1 $\frac{3}{8}$
1830	.	.	.	1.540	or	5	0 $\frac{3}{4}$
1832	.	.	.	1.560	or	5	1 $\frac{3}{8}$

From 1809 to 1814, the standard was merely nominal, as the conscripts, if not labouring under some other defect, were admitted into the ranks, how diminutive soever their stature might be, and often when under five feet in height.—D'ANGEVILLE, *Statistique de la Population Française*, p. 72.

† The average height of the conscripts in the years 1804 and 1810, in the following six departments of France, stood as follows :—

		Average height. 1804.		Average height. 1810.
		Metres.		Metres.
Hautes Alps,	.	1.623	.	1.587
Cantal,	.	1.660	.	1.627
Creuse,	.	1.598	.	1.567
Ille et Vilaine,	.	1.658	.	1.570
Landes,	.	1.614	.	1.574
Vienne,	.	1.613	.	1.589

It may truly be said that this table speaks volumes as to the cruel effect of the wars of Napoleon on the physical wellbeing of mankind. And the learned

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

all the canals and navigable rivers of Prussia were frozen ; and the whole reserve stores and artillery of the French army, with the exception of the small portion which the retreating columns could drag with their wearied array, were locked up in boats by the ice. The cavalry and artillery horses were almost destroyed ; the wreck of the grand army could hardly muster thirty thousand bayonets. Meanwhile the Russian troops were rapidly advancing ; the dispositions of Prussia were more than doubtful ; and it was easy to foresee, from the intense national spirit which burned beyond the Rhine, that the defection of the court of Berlin would be followed by an immediate crusade from the whole warlike and robust population of the north of Germany. In these circumstances, an extraordinary effort was necessary to provide resources against the danger ; and nothing but the utmost vigour in the Emperor, and patriotic spirit in the French people, could furnish the means of preserving the national independence. The receipts of the year 1811 had fallen twenty-seven million francs, (£1,080,000,) those of 1812, thirty-seven million francs, (£1,480,000,) short of their estimated amount. The imposts, both direct and indirect, had reached their maximum ; the experience of the two last years having proved that an increase of taxation produced no corresponding augmentation in the receipts of the exchequer.¹ The extinction of commercial wealth

¹ Thib. ix.
207, 208.
Fain, i. 28.
29. Sav. vi.
40, 41.

author from whom these extracts are made, correctly ascribes to the same cause the continued lowering of the standard in the next generation. “Les calculs de mon troisième tableau prouvent que pour avoir 1000 réserves pendant la période de 1825 à 1833, on a dû prononcer, dans toute la France, 926 exemptions pour causes physiques de toute nature. Ce résultat serait alarmant, si l’on ne savait que les jeunes gens des classes qui ont servi de base à nos calculs étaient nés de 1805 à 1813, époque où les grandes guerres de l’empire entraînaient la population valide hors du territoire. La longue paix enfantée par les malheureux événements de 1815, et le bien-être progressif du peuple qui en est résulté, nous promettent pour l’avenir des résultats plus satisfaisants.” —D’ANGEVILLE, p. 84. I am indebted for these interesting details regarding the effect of the wars of Napoleon on the physical resources of the French population, and the stature of the race in that country, to the kindness of a distinguished friend, a well-known member of the English bar—H. Merivale, Esq. of the Inner Temple.

had rendered the raising supplies by loan impossible. It was with a sinking revenue, therefore, a taxation which had reached its limits, an exhausted military population, and a ruined credit, that France had to make head against the hostility of combined Europe.

The energy with which the French people repaired these terrible disasters, and the fortitude with which the Emperor bore up against them, are worthy of the highest admiration. His first care was to restore the cavalry and artillery horses. A sufficient number of pieces of cannon existed in the arsenals ; and as the French empire contained three million five hundred thousand horses, it was not found a difficult matter, by offering high prices, to put on an effective footing these essential branches of the public service. Still the want of skill in the riders rendered them but ill qualified to contend with the numerous and veteran cavalry of the Allies. To repair the chasms occasioned in the ranks, and make head against the hourly increasing force of the enemy in the north of Germany, a hundred and eighty thousand men, *in addition* to the great levy of three hundred and fifty thousand already ordered,¹ were placed at the disposal of the minister of war—viz. eighty thousand of the first ban of the National Guards, who had already been embodied, disciplined, clothed, and put on permanent duty in the frontier fortresses, during the Russian war ; ninety thousand conscripts, drawn from those liable to serve in 1814, and ten thousand *Gardes d'honneur*. Now were seen the good effects of the sagacious foresight which had prompted Napoleon, at the commencement of the campaign of 1812, to call into active service so large a portion of the first ban of the National Guard, drawn from the classes liable to the conscription from 1807 to 1812. Nearly a hundred thousand men of mature years and confirmed strength, ready disciplined and equipped, were in arms, in the fortresses on the Rhine, to recruit the army in Germany ; and to their exertions the victories of Lützen

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

73.

Napoleon's
vigorous
measures to
repair these
losses.

April 3,
1813.

¹ *Ante*, ch.
lxxiv. § 51.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

¹ Senatus
Consultum,
April 3,
1813. Moni-
teur, April
4. Sav. vi.
41. Gold-
smith, vi.
273.

74.
Levy of
the Gardes
d'honneur,
and mari-
time con-
scripts.

and Bautzen are mainly to be ascribed. Very different were the young conscripts, drawn from those liable to serve in 1814, who constituted the remainder of the infantry force added to the standards. Called into active service a year before they had arrived at the legal age, and torn from their parental homes before they had acquired either the steadiness or the strength of manhood, they were wholly unable to withstand the iron veterans who had, in the Russian bands, survived the campaign of 1812. Great numbers of them disappeared from the ranks, or sank into the hospitals, before they reached the Elbe; and in the confusion and disorganisation which pervaded the army before it even saw the enemy, was to be found too sure an indication that the empire had reached the limits of its physical strength, and approached its fall.¹

To give consistency to this brave but motley array of young troops, the Emperor drew from Spain the four remaining regiments of the Imperial Guard which were still there, a legion of veteran gendarmerie, and a considerable body of Polish light horse. In addition to this, the skeletons of a hundred and fifty battalions, consisting of the most trusty and experienced officers and non-commissioned officers, were despatched from the Peninsular legions to the Rhine. Without materially weakening the forces in Spain, they proved of inestimable importance in conferring efficiency upon the new levies. In addition to this, two extraordinary measures were adopted to repair the wide chasms in the artillery and cavalry forces. By the first, forty thousand sailors or naval gunners were drafted from the marine service, and transferred to the artillery of the land forces; while their place was supplied by the young seamen whom the maritime conscription rigorously levied from the inhabitants in the neighbourhood of the seaports. By the second, a corps of ten thousand horsemen was raised on an entirely new plan, from the flower of the population of the empire. Both officers and privates, who were alike drawn from

the higher classes of the people, were to be equipped, dressed, and mounted, at their own expense. In return for such sacrifices, they obtained the pay of the chasseurs of the Guard. After twelve months' service, the privates rose to the rank of sub-lieutenant ; and when the campaign was concluded, such of their number as were most distinguished were to be formed into companies of the body-guards ; a corps in an especial manner intrusted with personal attendance on the Emperor. In this way Napoleon succeeded in obtaining, at little expense, and by the prospect rather of future distinction than of present advantage, a body of ten thousand horse, raised exclusively from the more opulent classes of his subjects. In this measure he had, however, a secret object of still greater importance in view, which was effectually attained. These young men were so many hostages for the fidelity of their parents and relations, occupying for the most part important situations in the country, upon whose adherence to his dynasty he could not securely rely in the crisis which was approaching. They behaved, when brought into the field, with the usual gallantry of the French character ; but the youths, for the most part inexperienced, and riding horses as raw as themselves, were little qualified for the rude encounter of the Muscovite or Cossack cavalry. The fatigues of the campaign speedily proved fatal to their unformed constitutions ; and before the Allied standards approached the Rhine, more than three-fourths of this noble force had sunk under the sword of the enemy, or the contagion of the hospitals.¹

CHAP.
LXXIV.
1813.

¹ Senat.
Cons. April
3, 1813.
Moniteur,
Thib. ix.
237, 239.
Sav. vi. 41,
42. Fain, i.
35, 37.

In addition to these extraordinary measures, the greatest efforts were made to bring forward the conscripts, and enlist voluntary recruits ; every man capable of bearing arms was forwarded from the depots in the interior to the respective regiments ; a large body of marines were formed into a division of infantry ; and the second ban of the National Guards, called into permanent

75.
Force thus
collected by
Napoleon
for the cam-
paign.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

duty in all the frontier provinces, replaced their comrades of the first ban, who had now taken their place as regular soldiers in the ranks of the grand army. Two thousand of the gendarmerie in the interior were distributed among several new regiments of cavalry, which were formed from the sons of the postmasters and the forest guards throughout France, and a reinforcement of seven thousand horse was thus obtained for the army. The same measures were pursued with extraordinary activity in the kingdom of Italy, under the able direction of Eugene Beauharnais; and Piedmont rivalled France in the zeal with which it fulfilled or anticipated all the demands of the Emperor. The princes of the Rhenish Confederacy at the same time received the most pressing orders to complete and forward to the general point of rendezvous, in the north of Germany, their respective contingents. Such was the vigour of the Emperor, and the zeal with which he was seconded in every part of his vast dominions, that by the middle of April, not only were the preparations on all sides in a great state of forwardness, but six hundred pieces of cannon, two thousand caissons, and above two hundred thousand men, were converging from the Rhine and the Alps to the banks of the Elbe.¹

¹ Jom. iv.
256, 258.
Sav. vi. 41,
42. Thib.
ix. 238, 239.
Fain, i. 36,
38.

76.
Seizure of
the property
of the com-
munes for
the public
treasury.

These prodigious exertions, however, entailed a vast expense upon the already exhausted French treasury, and seemed to render the resource of loans indispensable, in a country where commercial credit was extinguished, and the powers of capital unknown. On the most moderate calculation, two hundred and thirty-two million francs (£9,280,000) required to be raised without delay; and neither by increase of taxation, nor by any other method, did it seem practicable to provide for a third of the sum. To meet the exigencies of his situation, Napoleon fell upon an expedient which, though it savoured much in appearance of revolutionary spoliation, was yet essentially distinguished from the measures of the Constituent

Assembly and Convention, by the compensation which it provided for the parties whose property was seized. Justifying the proposal by the necessities of the public situation, the minister of finance, Count Molé, proposed that a public law should authorise the sale of all the heritable property belonging to the municipalities, public hospitals, and communes; the treasury receiving the price, and the incorporated bodies interested being inscribed, for the amount of the price received, as creditors in the books of the public funds. Landed property was to be exposed at the rate of twenty, houses of fifteen years' purchase. So considerable was the corporate property still existing in the empire, that it was calculated its sale would produce the large sum of three hundred and seventy million francs, or nearly fifteen million pounds sterling. To encourage intending purchasers, one-sixth of the price only was to be paid down at the purchase, another sixth in three months, and the remaining two-thirds at remote periods. The orator, in making this proposal, compared Napoleon to Charlemagne, "ordering the sale of the useless herbs in his gardens, when his hand was distributing to his people the spoil of conquered nations." But, lest any unpleasant inquiries should be instituted by a refractory legislature into the produce of these sales, or the distribution of these spoils, it was announced that "the deputies of all the provinces of the empire should come to the capital to receive, *every three years*, the accounts of the public revenues;" indicating thus, in no equivocal manner, that the legislative functions of the Chamber of Deputies were to cease, and that they were to be assembled only at the interval of years to give a formal sanction to the public expenditure. Molé concluded, after a review of the flattering condition of the empire, with these words:¹—"If a man of the age of the Medicis, or of Louis XIV., were to revisit the earth, and, at the sight of so many marvels, were to ask how many ages of peace and glorious reigns had been required

CHAP.
LXXIV.
1813.

Feb. 5,
1813.

¹ Molé's report, Feb. 5, 1813. Moniteur, and Goldsmith, vi. 141, 142. Thib. ix. 209, 210.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

77.
Progress of
the cadastre.

to produce them, he would be answered, twelve years of war and a single man." ✓

Count Molé's speech contained some details regarding the progress of the great work of forming a cadastre, or general valuation of the lands of the empire, to regulate the public assessments which Napoleon had so much and so justly at heart. It was begun in 1808 ; but such was the immensity of labour with which the work was attended, that in 1813 little more than a fifth of the territory of the empire was gone over. The progress already made, however, showed clearly the importance of the undertaking, the weight of the French direct taxes, and the frightful inequalities which, from its want, existed in the collection of the revenue. "Out of forty-seven thousand communes," says the report, "ten thousand have been measured ; and of these ten thousand, six thousand have been valued. The cadastre has already proved, that the land-tax does not exceed an *eighth part of the net revenue* of the properties ; and, nevertheless, one proprietor pays a *third*, and another not a *fifteenth*—an incredible disproportion, which the cadastre is intended to rectify." ¹

¹ Count
Molé's Re-
port, Moni-
teur, 5th
Feb. 1813.

78.

Failure of
the financial
measures,
and arbi-
trary exac-
tions.

A small proportion only, however, of the funds calculated upon from the sale of this corporate property, was actually realised. The whirlwind of disaster in which the French were involved at the close of the year, and the invasion of the Allies in the spring following, both prevented the completion of the sales, and the collection even of the ordinary revenue, in a great many provinces. By successive decrees of the 11th and 16th November 1813, large additions were made to the indirect taxes, particularly those on salt and the *droits réunis* ; as also thirty additional centimes (*i.e.* thirty per cent more) were added to the direct taxes. The produce of these different sources of revenue was estimated at a hundred and nine million francs, or four million three hundred and sixty thousand pounds sterling ; but the burden was merely nominal : little if any of it was actually raised. All sorts of violent

expedients were adopted to raise money ; and by the admission even of the partisans of Napoleon, the imposition of arbitrary and illegal taxes became usual.* The overthrow of the imperial arms in Spain and Germany, and the reflux of its legions over the Rhine and the Pyrenees, at once prostrated the financial affairs of the empire ; for they threw the troops upon the resources of France itself, and, by putting an end to the requisitions on foreign states, and the system of making war maintain war, revealed at once the total disproportion between its financial capabilities and its military establishment.¹

CHAP.
LXXIV.
1813.

¹ Thib. ix.
213, 214.
Sav. vi. 40,
41.

The national resources of the French empire, as they were developed in these memorable reports, and evinced in these strenuous exertions, are the more worthy of attention, that this was the LAST EXPOSITION of them which was made to the world—this was the political testament of Napoleon to future ages. The disasters which immediately after crowded round his sinking empire, and the extraordinary difficulties with which he had to contend, prevented anything of the kind being subsequently attempted. And when order and regularity again emerged from the chaos, under the restored Bourbon dynasty, France, bereft of all its Revolutionary conquests, and reduced to the dimensions of 1789, possessed little more than two-thirds of the territory, and not a fourth of the influence, which it had enjoyed under the Emperor. To the picture exhibited of the empire at this period, therefore, the eyes of future ages will be constantly turned, as presenting both the highest point of elevation which the fortunes of France had ever attained, and the greatest assemblage of national and military strength which the annals of modern times have exhibited.

79.
Lasting interest of this last *exposé* of the empire by Napoleon.

* "It was at this period that the commencement of imposts, plainly illegal, took place. It was about the same period that measures were adopted which were not less arbitrary in other departments ; but the difficulties of the crisis rendered them unavoidable."—SAVARY, vi. 40.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

80.

Ineffectual
attempts to
induce Sax-
ony to join
the league
against
France.

The open adhesion of Prussia to the Russian alliance, and the advance of their united armies in all quarters to the shores of the Elbe, had immediately the effect of rendering the insurrection universal on its right bank. But Saxony was still undecided; and although the ferment was almost as vehement in its provinces as in the Prussian states, yet no symptom of approbation of it had yet been given by the government; and it was well known that the vast benefits the King had received from the French Emperor, had bound him to his interests by very different bonds from those which retained the other states of the Rhenish confederacy in their allegiance. The reputation, however, which the King of Saxony had justly acquired for integrity and virtue, rendered it of great importance to obtain the moral weight of his adhesion to the Germanic league; and his states lay so immediately in the theatre of war between the contending armies, that it was of the last importance to secure without delay the support of his forces in the field, and the protection of the strong fortresses which he held on the Elbe. The Allied sovereigns, accordingly, from the very first spared no efforts to induce him to join their league; but nothing could shake the firmness of Frederick Augustus, and he declared he would share the fortunes of his benefactor, whatever they might be. While history must remark with admiration the fidelity of this upright monarch to his engagements, which seemed to increase with the disasters which had dissolved those of so many other states, it must yet lament the unhappy combination of circumstances which thus put his private honour at variance with his public duty, and rendered it impossible for him to adhere to his engagements, without sacrificing the interests alike of the people whom he ruled, and the great fatherland to which he belonged.¹

¹ Schoell, x.
199. Procla-
mation of
King of
Saxony,
Feb. 23,
1813. Ibid.
p. 200.

The advance of the Russian troops towards Dresden in the end of February, rendered it no longer possible for the King to remain in that capital; and he accordingly

abandoned it on the 24th February, after issuing a noble proclamation, in which he declared his resolution never to separate his cause from that of his tried benefactor and powerful ally.* On the 9th April, the King of Prussia addressed a letter to the King of Saxony, in which he expressed "a hope that all the German princes will seize with eagerness an opportunity which certainly will not again present itself, of shaking off the chains of France, by which they are fettered, and which have so long plunged these once flourishing countries in misery and ruin." Frederick Augustus, however, returned for answer, that "he was guided solely by a regard for the good of his dominions, and respect for the engagements which he had contracted;" and thenceforward all negotiations between the parties ceased, and Saxony remained permanently attached to the fortunes of Napoleon.¹

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

81.

Failure of
all attempts
to gain over
Saxony.
April 9.

April 16.

¹ Schoell, x.
201, 202.

Important as these negotiations were, they yet yielded in magnitude and interest to those which at the same period took place between the cabinets of St Petersburg, Berlin, and Vienna, with a view to detach Austria from the French alliance; and which, in their ultimate effects, came to exercise a decisive influence upon the issue of the war. It may readily be believed that the unparalleled disasters of the Moscow campaign produced as powerful a sensation at Vienna as elsewhere in Europe; and that the strong party there, who had always been hostile to the French alliance, deemed the time at last arrived when Austria might regain her lost provinces, and resume her wonted station on the theatre of Europe. The earliest letters, accordingly, of M. Otto, the French ambassador there, after the Moscow catastrophe was known, contained the most vivid pictures of the vehemence of the public feeling, and of the loud declarations that the power of

82.

Negotia-
tions with
Austria.
First mea-
sures of
Austria
after the
Moscow
retreat.

* "Faithful to our alliance, we reckon with confidence on the success which, if our wishes for peace are not heard, will await us from the aid of our powerful ally, the active succour of the confederated princes, and the approved valour of our brave soldiers."—*Proclamation of* FREDERICK AUGUSTUS, Feb. 23, 1813; SCHOELL, x.

CHAP.
LXXXIV.

1813.

France was irrevocably broken ; that all Germany would speedily rise to assert its independence ; and that Austria would deservedly perish, if, at such a crisis, she so far forgot what was due to herself as the ancient head of the Germanic empire, and her obvious present interests, as to adhere to the withering alliance of the French Emperor. So powerful and general was this feeling, that it required all the firmness of M. de Metternich to withstand the torrent ; and he was exposed to no small obloquy by attempting to moderate it.* But his line of policy from the very first was decidedly taken. Aware that Austria, placed midway between the two, had as much to fear from the colossal power of Russia as from that of France, his great object was to improve the present juncture in such a way as to make it turn as much as possible to the advantage of his own country, and give her the means of maintaining her independence in the midst of the terrible contest which was approaching, and which was likely soon to shake to its foundation every European monarchy. With this view, while he protested, with perfect good faith, that the cabinet of Vienna would not take part against the French empire ; that she was sincerely devoted to its interests ; would not open a negotiation with England without its privity ; and would make use of the great influence which circumstances had given her, to dictate a general and durable peace — he, at the same time, made no secret of his perfect acquaintance with the magnitude of the disasters the grand army had undergone ; of the vast league, at the head of which Austria, if so disposed, might now place herself ; and of the loud clamour which was raised by fifty millions of men for her to assume that station.¹†

¹ M. Otto to Maret, Dec. 28, 1812, and Jan. 8, 1813. FAIN, i., 290, 295.

* “In their fury against France, the war faction has never ceased to attack in every possible manner the first partisan of the French alliance, Count Metternich. Not a day passes without some new device being fallen upon to discredit him, and it is currently reported by them, that he will be replaced by M. de Stadion.”—COUNT OTTO to MARET, 28th Dec. 1812 ; FAIN, i. 292.

† “‘If Austria,’ said Metternich to me, ‘were now to take another line, she would soon have 50,000,000 of men on her side—all Germany and Italy would

The intelligence which soon after arrived of the defection of York, and the ambiguous attitude of Prussia, augmented the embarrassment of the cabinet of Vienna. Not only were confidential communications made from the foreign office at Berlin and M. Hardenberg, but England came forward with the most generous offers, and even tendered a subsidy of ten millions sterling, to put the Imperial armies on a war footing, if the cabinet of Vienna would accede to the European league—a temptation peculiarly difficult to be withstood by a power which, from the result of repeated disastrous wars, and constant diminutions of territory, found its finances in the most deplorable condition. The intelligence from Prussia, however, and the general ferment which it produced throughout Germany, awakened new alarms in the breast of the cautious and far-seeing Austrian minister, lest the Russian influence should be unduly extended during the first transports of German deliverance, and the revolutionary spirit revived in Europe in the course of the last throes of the struggle for its extinction.¹*

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

83.

Secret nego-
tiation be-
tween Aus-
tria and
England.

¹ Otto to
Maret, Jan.
21, 1813.
Thib. ix.
227.

join her.' It is evident that he wishes to make a merit of not joining against us at a moment when they suppose us less powerful than the Russians, and when the most flattering offers—Italy, the Illyrian provinces, and the supremacy in Germany—are made to induce them to join the Russian league. Nevertheless, he does not underrate our advantages; for yesterday morning he said to me—'Russia is too deeply implicated with England to be in a condition to treat alone. You may believe what I say—we have a thousand ways of arriving at the truth, which are not open to you. Cajoled, as they imagine, by all your enemies, we easily elicit from them their most secret thoughts. We will not open any direct communication with England without your authority; and we will do so in the manner you wish, assuming the air of a power which acts spontaneously. What have you to fear? We will compromise the English ministry in the eyes of the nation, and take upon ourselves the whole blame of failure. Despite your last reverses, your position is still brilliant; it is not the Emperor Napoleon who has the greatest need of peace. If he could bring himself to act on the defensive, he might with ease remain two years on the Vistula; never would the Russians cross that barrier. You will easily preserve the attitude which you had assumed before the war; but it is Germany, Prussia, Poland, and above all, Austria, which will suffer from such a state of things. It is natural, therefore, that we should with loud cries call out for peace.'—OTTO to MARET, Jan. 3 and 8, 1813; FAIN, i. 291, 295.

* "'York's defection,' said Metternich to me, 'affords an instance of what I have so often directed your attention to—the *Græca fides* of the Russians,

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

84.

Secret views
of Metter-
nich at this
period.

He deemed it most prudent, therefore, to make separate overtures to the cabinet of London, with a view to a general pacification; and although this was done with the knowledge and approbation of the French ambassador, yet his proposals were intended to lay the foundation of independent measures. At the same time, in order to give them the appearance of coming secretly from the Austrian cabinet, he sent M. Wessenberg, the agent employed, by the circuitous route of Copenhagen and Goteborg, as if by stealth, to conceal his motions from the knowledge of the French authorities. Notwithstanding this, however, his whole movements and instructions were communicated by the French ambassador at Vienna to Napoleon. Wessenberg was the bearer of a letter to Lord Castlereagh, in which the mediation of Austria was proposed with the view of putting a period to the calamities which were desolating Europe. A friendly intervention was all that was yet announced, although Austria was underhand arming, and preparing to throw her weight in the field into the scale against any power which might resist her demands. So completely, however, was the double intrigue thus carrying on by the Imperial cabinet concealed from those not immediately in the secret, that Wessenberg was arrested by the French authorities at Hamburg, and only allowed to proceed on his destination after his papers had been examined — a slight which gave great umbrage to the court of Vienna, and threw a sensible chill over the friendly nature of the relations between the two cabinets.¹

¹ Otto to
Maret, Jan.
21, 1813.
Thib. ix.
227, 228.

Meanwhile the Emperor of Russia sent a confidential agent, M. Stakelberg, to Vienna, in order to sound the Imperial cabinet on the project of a European alliance

and the embarrassing situation in which, in consequence, the greater part of sovereigns are placed, in respect to their troops and their subjects.' Metternich appears to me to labour under the apprehension, that the defection of the Prussian troops may become the signal of a revolution, in consequence of which the Russians will profit with their ordinary astuteness by the first impression which it may create in Poland and Germany."—COUNT OTTO to MARET, 11th Jan. 1813; FAIN, i. 296, 297.

against France. This proceeding was really kept secret, while Metternich, without making known their true tenor, ostensibly revealed his whole confidential communications to M. Otto, who daily transmitted accounts of them to Paris.* The efforts of Metternich, however, in all this maze of diplomatic intrigue, of which alone he kept the thread, and in which he made all parties believe he was confidential with them alone, were uniform and consistent. These were, to increase the weight of Austria in the estimation of all the powers, by representing her mediation as too important to be rejected, and her aid as too powerful to be withheld. To improve the great advantages, however, which circumstances had thus put at his disposal, the Austrian minister added seventy thousand men from the landwehr, or militia, to the regular army; still holding out to the French ambassador, that the object of the armament was to give such weight to the Austrian intervention as to render Russia unable to withstand it.† In order still farther to lull the apprehensions of Napoleon, Metternich lost no opportunity of displaying to the courts of London and St Petersburg every *apparent* proof of the

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

85.

Austria begins to arm, to give weight to her mediation.

Jan. 24.

* After listening to Stakelberg's enumeration of the great advantages gained by Russia, and its disposition to come to the aid of other powers, especially Austria, and enable it to recover its lost provinces, Metternich said—"Listen, my dear Stakelberg; you are like a man who sees the light for the first time, after having been shut up for six months in a dark room: the radiance of day dazzles you. Believe me, we see more clearly. The system of the Emperor is immovable: it is to think nothing of territorial aggrandisement, which would be too dearly purchased by the expense of a single campaign. He wishes only a general peace, and anxiously desires that you should concur in it."—OTTO to MARET, 26th Jan. 1813; FAIR, i. 301.

† "This first advance of Russia," said Metternich to Otto, "is a great point gained. Rely upon us: we will let nothing slip—absolutely nothing; for we are not less interested in doing so than you. Everything depends on our attitude being imposing. The Emperor has ordered 100,000 men to be added to the regular army, including the auxiliary corps. If we had added only 30,000, we should have exceeded the contingent provided by the treaty, and given Russia ground to refuse our intervention. Hitherto the war has not been *Austrian*. If it should become so in the end, it is not with 30,000 men, but with the whole forces of the Austrian monarchy, that we will attack the Russians. Meanwhile they will see us without disquietude augment our armies in Galicia, and take good care not to provoke us."—OTTO to MARET, 26th Jan. 1813; FAIR, i. 303.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

Feb. 15.

¹ Hard. xii.
64, 65. Otto
to Maret,
Jan. 25, and
Feb. 15,
1813. Fain,
i. 303, 305.

perfect harmony between his cabinet and that of the Tuileries; reiterated the most flattering assurances to the French ambassador of the cordial union, founded on mutual interest, which subsisted between the two powers; and announced his intention of sending Prince Schwartzenberg to Paris still further to improve it. At this time, however, in secret he was lending a ready ear to the overtures of both Russia and Prussia, and maintaining a correspondence, veiled in profound mystery, with Hardenberg at Breslau.^{1*}

86.

Announce-
ment by
Austria of
an armed
mediation,
and arrival
of Narbonne
at Vienna.

Napoleon, more clear-sighted than his ambassador, was not altogether satisfied with his diplomatic relations at Vienna; and, in particular, entertained a not unnatural jealousy of the friendly mediation of a power which, at the moment it professed such cordial feelings of attachment, was adding seventy thousand men to its troops of the line. This feeling of uneasiness was not diminished by the declaration issued by Austria in the middle of February, which announced that her intervention was to be that of an "*armed* mediation;" and called upon the nation to submit to new burdens, to enable the government to maintain that station, and "remove the war from its own frontiers." The ominous nature of this declaration was very little removed by the reiterated assurances of Metternich to the French ambassador, that it was against Russia that all these preparations were directed, and that the most earnest desire of the cabinet

Feb. 17.

* "Your alliance with Russia," said Metternich to Otto, "was monstrous; it had no foundation, but a most precarious basis—that of the exclusion of English commerce. It was an alliance resulting from war, and commanded by the conqueror: it could not possibly be of long duration. Ours, on the contrary, is founded on natural and permanent grounds of mutual interest: it ought to be as eternal as the mutual necessities from which it has arisen. It was ourselves who sought it, and we had reflected well before we did so. Could we retrace our steps, we would not deviate in one iota from what we have already done. We are going to send Prince Schwartzenberg to Paris, in the double view of explaining to the Emperor our real intentions, and giving to Europe a decisive proof of our friendship, by placing at his court the commander of the auxiliary corps in his service."—OTTO to MARET, 15th Feb. 1813; FAIN, i. 305.

of Vienna was to maintain unchanged its amicable relations with France. The Emperor began to entertain serious apprehensions that Austria was only dissembling to gain time to complete her preparations; that a good understanding between her and the northern courts was already laying the foundation of a more formidable coalition than France had yet encountered; and that M. Otto had been the dupe of the superior finesse and dissimulation of Metternich. In order to get to the bottom of the affair, he recalled Otto, and sent Count Narbonne to Vienna, to endeavour to penetrate the real intentions of the Austrian cabinet. The polished manners and diplomatic talents of the new ambassador were well calculated to gain the confidence of the aristocratic circles at the Imperial capital; but he himself had a presentiment that the alliance was at an end, before his arrival, and said, on setting out, "When the physician pronounces the case hopeless, they send for the quack."¹

Count Narbonne arrived at Vienna on the 17th March. Schwartzberg, on the Austrian side, did not leave that capital till the 29th, and was only to present his credentials at the Tuileries on the 13th April, two days before Napoleon set out for the army. Though the new ambassador was received with the most studied attention by the Austrian court, yet circumstances ere long occurred, which demonstrated by deeds, more truthful than words, that there was a secret understanding between the cabinet of Vienna and the Allied powers. Intelligence of the treaty of Kalisch between Russia and Prussia was received about the same time; and Metternich, finding that the league was every day becoming more formidable, began to be more independent and resolute in his language; while the magnitude and energy of his military preparations clearly evinced that, incline to what side she might, Austria was resolved to act no subordinate part in the strife.²

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

¹ Otto to
Maret,
March 20,
1813. Fain,
i. 311. Thib.
ix. 235, 236.
Hard. xii.
75, 76.

87.
Austria
more openly
inclines to
the coalition.

March 18.

² Fain, i.
468.

Those preparations, and the continued retreat of the

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

88.

Secret con-
vention
between
Russia and
Austria.
March 29.

Austrian army in Galicia, were the result of the secret understanding between the cabinet of Vienna and that of St Petersburg, which led in the end of March to a convention between their respective forces, of which Napoleon justly complained as highly prejudicial to his interests. By this convention it was stipulated, that the Russian corps should push out light troops on both flanks of the retreating Austrians ; that the Russian general should announce the termination of the armistice to their commander, assigning as a pretext the impossibility of leaving on his own flanks and rear the flame of insurrection, excited by the Polish army under Prince Poniatowsky ; that the Russian corps should then advance with a force at least equal to that of the Austrians, and General Frimont, commanding in the absence of Prince Schwartzberg, should retire along the right bank of the Vistula ; that as soon as this retreat was concluded, a new armistice should be agreed to, without any limit in point of time, to be terminated only on a notice of fifteen days, and during which the Austrians should preserve the towns of Cracow, Sandomir, and the post of Opatowin, with a *tête-de-pont* in front of each of their respective bridges ; and “ that the present transaction between the two imperial courts shall *remain for ever secret, and shall not be communicated, by the one party or the other, save to the King of Prussia alone.*”¹

¹ Fain, i.
465. Con-
vention,
March 29,
1813. Ibid.
i. 474.

89.

And be-
tween Aus-
tria and
Saxony.
April 8.

Shortly after, a convention was concluded between the Austrian and Saxon commanders, which provided for the passage of the Saxon troops, about five thousand in number, which had fallen back to the Galician frontiers with Schwartzberg's corps, through the imperial territories. The latter convention was immediately and officially laid by Schwartzberg at Paris before the cabinet of St Cloud, while the former was religiously kept a secret ; but along with the documents there was presented the ominous declaration—“ His Imperial Majesty regards the present moment as that which must decide the fate of Europe,

April 21.

by fixing that of the intermediate powers. Neither France nor Russia run any considerable risk: it is Austria and Prussia which are really endangered. The Emperor of Austria will remain faithful to his character: he will not limit his proceedings in favour of the cause which he feels himself bound to support—that of peace—to mere words; and if the exaggerated ideas which possibly may arise in some of the coalesced cabinets should prevail over the reason and moderation which he himself will never cease to profess, his Imperial Majesty will, without hesitation, cast an imposing force into the balance of *the power which he may regard*, without respect to the immense complications of the moment, *as his most natural ally.*"¹

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

¹ Schwartz-
enberg's
note to
Maret, 22d
April 1813.
Fain, i. 465;
and Conven-
tion, 29th
March
1813. Ibid.
i. 474, 482.

Notwithstanding all the pains which were taken to conceal the important convention of Kalisch from the knowledge of the French diplomatists, its results were too important to permit it to remain long a secret. In particular, the continued retreat of the Austrian auxiliary corps under General Frimont, and prolongation of the armistice between it and the Russians, appeared the more extraordinary to Napoleon, that it occurred at the very time when he himself was setting out for Mayence, to renew hostilities of a decisive character on the banks of the Elbe. It was made, accordingly, the subject of immediate and bitter complaint by Count Narbonne to Metternich, accompanied by a demand that the Austrian auxiliary corps should forthwith resume hostilities, or, at all events, maintain the positions assigned to it by the convention of the 12th January.* It was no easy matter for the Austrian diplomatist to evade so obvious and

90.
Remon-
straues of
Napoleon
against the
Austrian
proceedings.

* "His Majesty the Emperor," said Narbonne, "will experience extreme satisfaction, if the views of Austria in favour of a general peace should be accomplished; but he has never yet heard that such a wish could annul the explicit provisions of an existing treaty. That treaty expressly provided for an auxiliary corps, under the orders of the Emperor; if it does not obey his instructions, what conclusion is he entitled to draw?" — NARBONNE TO METTERNICH, 21st April 1813; FAIN, i. 468.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

April 7.
1 Narbonne
to Metter-
nich, April
21, 1813.
Fain, i. 465,
470.

reasonable a demand ; the more especially as Napoleon had previously announced, that in the beginning of May he was to be on the Elbe at the head of three hundred thousand men, and had urged the cabinet of Vienna to second his operations, by its generals debouching from Bohemia at the head of a hundred thousand, and at the same time denouncing the armistice, and resuming hostilities with at least fifty thousand on the side of the Vistula.¹

91.
Metter-
nich's
reply.
April 9.

Metternich, therefore, contented himself simply with replying, that "if, contrary to his most ardent hopes, the return of peace should not crown his efforts, Austria, from her mediatorial attitude, and the geographical situation of her empire, could no longer take part in the war in the quality of a merely auxiliary power ; and that, in consequence, the stipulations regarding succour contained in the treaty of the 14th March 1812 *had ceased to be applicable to existing circumstances*. To denounce the armistice, and resume hostilities with the Russians, in these circumstances, would be expedient neither as a measure of war nor of peace. In the former view, it is not with an army of thirty thousand men that the Emperor should appear in the field : in the latter, it would be highly unbecoming in a mediating power to be the first to renew hostilities. The Emperor is thoroughly persuaded, as his majesty the Emperor of the French has frequently admitted, that the most effectual means of supporting the part of a mediator will be by the development of the most imposing forces, all directed towards one object—a general peace. But it must be such a development as will leave no doubt that the mediating power is prepared, if her efforts fail, to appear on the scene as a principal party, and to give to her words the necessary support."²

² Narbonne
to Metter-
nich, 21st
April 1813 ;
and Metter-
nich to Nar-
bonne, April
22, 1813.
Fain, i. 465,
474.

While the cabinet of Vienna, veiling its preparations under the specious guise of a wish to support with effect the part of a mediator, which was with some plausibility represented as in a manner forced upon it, was thus gra-

dually but perceptibly extricating itself from the restraints of the French alliance, and preparing to appear, at no distant period, with decisive effect on the theatre of Europe, negotiations of a more conclusive character had taken place with the court of Stockholm. Russia, in the first instance, had taken the lead in these communications; and even so far back as the close of 1812, had made overtures with a view to obtaining the more active accession of Sweden to the cause of the confederacy, on condition of her obtaining the cession of Norway, which, since the loss of Finland, had become almost indispensable to her existence as an independent nation. The success of this important negotiation was much facilitated by the arrogance with which, at the same period, Napoleon continued to treat Bernadotte in his diplomatic intercourse—an arrogance more suitable to the victor of Wagram than the fugitive from Russia. So keenly did the old French marshal feel this treatment, that not only did he publish a report by his minister Engestroom, setting forth the ruinous consequences to Sweden of the alliance with France; but, in the end of March, he addressed a letter to Napoleon, offering his mediation for the conclusion of a general peace, and containing expressions indicating the indignation felt at the unworthy treatment of two hundred Swedish vessels and their crews, captured by France before war had begun between the two powers, the crews of which were still detained in prison, while the cargoes had been confiscated.^{1*}

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

92.

Negotia-
tions with
Sweden.Dec. 29,
1812.

Jan. 7.

March 23.

¹ Hard. xii.
45, 46.
Schoell's
Recueil,
i. 28.

The consent of Denmark to the sacrifice of Norway

* In that letter Bernadotte added, relative to the Moscow campaign: "From the moment that your Majesty plunged into the interior of that empire, the issue could not be doubtful: the Emperor Alexander and King of Sweden foresaw, in the end of August, its immense results; all the military combinations announced that your Majesty would be made prisoner. You have escaped that danger, sire; but where is your army? The *élite* of France, Italy, and Germany, no longer exist. There lie without sepulture the remains of those brave men who saved France at Fleurus, who conquered in Italy, survived the burning climate of Egypt, and chained victory to the Imperial standards at Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena, and Friedland."—See the Letter in SCHOELL'S *Recueil*, i. 28.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

93.

Views of
Denmark
at this pe-
riod.

was attempted to be gained by holding out the prospect of an indemnity on the side of Germany ; and, on this condition, it was earnestly pressed on the cabinet of Copenhagen to join its forces to those of Russia and Prussia. It was difficult to see where this indemnity was to be found ; for the Hanse Towns, which lay nearest to the Danish continental territories, would, on account of their commerce, be taken, it was foreseen, under the protection of Great Britain ; Westphalia, carved out of the old provinces of Prussia, was already reclaimed by its sovereign ; and Mecklenburg belonged to a prince united by the ties of blood to the imperial house of Russia. In these circumstances, the negotiation was not likely to lead to any satisfactory issue, though it was prosecuted at Copenhagen with much earnestness by the agents of the cabinets both of St Petersburg and St James's. Indeed, so far did it proceed, that at length Count Moltke and Count Bernstorff were sent to Kalisch, with ample powers to signify the accession of Denmark to the European alliance, provided the fleet taken at Copenhagen, with all the Danish colonies conquered by the English during the war, were restored ; Hamburg and Lübeck made over to them ; six hundred thousand pounds paid as an indemnity for their losses during the bombardment of Copenhagen ; and all their European possessions, particularly Norway, guaranteed to the Danish crown.¹

¹ Hard. xii.
97, 98.

94.
Treaty of
Oerebro
with
Sweden.
March 13.

These extravagant demands were not calculated to promote the conferences, the more especially as they had a tendency to throw a chill over the negotiations with Sweden, the forces of which, under the able direction of Bernadotte, were much more likely to interpose with effect in the approaching conflict in the north of Germany, than those of Denmark. It was justly determined, therefore, by the British cabinet, that they were altogether inadmissible ; and, without attempting the hopeless task of appeasing the resentment, or satisfying the demands of the Danish government, diplomatic relations were more closely drawn

with the court of Stockholm. They terminated in a treaty, by which the accession of Sweden to the Grand Alliance was openly secured. By it Sweden engaged to employ an auxiliary corps of thirty thousand men, to be placed, with the forces of Russia in the north of Germany, under the command of the Prince-Royal of Sweden: while England promised to cede Guadaloupe to Sweden, and grant her a subsidy of a million a-year, payable monthly. She received in return a promise, that for twenty years the British merchants should enjoy the right of an *entrepôt* in the harbours of Goteborg, Carls-ham, and Stralsund. The cession of Norway to Sweden was not openly recognised in this treaty; but it was indirectly sanctioned by a clause which, on the narrative that the existing engagements between Russia and Sweden had been communicated to the British government, provided that England "not only should oppose no obstacle to the perpetual annexation of Norway to Sweden, but should facilitate in that respect the views of the King of Sweden, not only by good offices, but by employing, if necessary, a naval co-operation, in concert with the Swedish and Russian troops." It was provided, however, that "force should not be employed to effect the union of Norway and Sweden, unless the King of Denmark had previously declined to join the alliance, on terms consistent with the existing engagements between the courts of St Petersburg and Stockholm, and that in the proposed junction every possible regard should be paid to the happiness and liberty of the people of Norway."¹

After this overt act of hostility, or rather of pacific spoliation, had been determined on, it was not to be expected that Denmark was to preserve the semblance even of pacific relations with the Allied powers. Accordingly, before long, the cabinet of Copenhagen was openly arrayed on the French side. It endeavoured, however, still to preserve relations with the northern powers, and promised to furnish twenty-five thousand men to aid their

CHAP.
LXXXIV.
1813.

¹ See the Treaty in Marten's Sup. v. 231; and Fain, i. 283; and in Ann. Reg. 1813. State Papers, p. 489.

95.
Accession of Denmark to the side of Napoleon.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

armies, while at the same time it was secretly negotiating with the French the means of delivering to them Hamburg. But Russia could not promise them any adequate compensation for the loss of Norway ; and although Sweden offered to relinquish all claims on that kingdom, provided she were secured in the bishopric of Drontheim, yet the Danish government refused to accept Pomerania in exchange, and the negotiation came to nothing. The Danish troops, in consequence, marched out of Altona, and ranged themselves under the orders of Marshal Davoust, and both parties prepared to decide their differences by the sword. Thus the system of disposing of the territories of others, so long practised by Napoleon, was openly adopted by his opponents ; and Mr Ponsonby, it must be confessed, had too much reason for the caustic remark which he made on the subject in the British parliament :—" Napoleon consented to the conquest of Finland, which did not belong to him ; Russia indemnified Sweden for the loss of it by the cession of Norway, to which it had no sort of title ; and England offered Denmark an equivalent in Lower Saxony, still in the occupation of France." It is to the honour of England that she alone, in this train of aggression, abstained from the spoliation of allied or neutral powers, at least for her own behoof, and sought for the indemnities which she offered in the dominions only of her enemies.¹

¹ Hard. xii.
97, 101.
Schoell, x.
204, 207.
Parl. Deb.

96.
Negotia-
tions be-
tween the
Allies and
Murat.

An important negotiation, but which did not at the time lead to the same practical results, took place between the Allied powers and the King of Naples. Murat, whose desertion of his post at the head of the army on the Oder, in January, had sufficiently evinced his disposition, if he could find an opportunity, of making his peace with the Allies, lent a willing ear to the insinuations of the cabinet of Vienna—that now was the time, by declaring himself openly, to secure his throne on a solid foundation ; but, desirous of saving that of Napoleon, he wrote early in April to the Emperor, urging him, in the name

of humanity, and from a due regard to his own safety and glory, to put a period to a war, disastrous at once to France and Europe, and particularly ruinous to Naples, where the Carbonari, instigated by the English, were perpetually on the verge of revolt. Neither this letter, nor others which he wrote at the same period to Marie Louise, met with any answer. But Murat, still uncertain of the line which the cabinet of Vienna was about to adopt, and desirous of seeing the issue of the approaching campaign before he took a decided part, deemed it prudent to adhere in the mean time to the French alliance, though the seeds of distrust were irrevocably sown between him and his imperial brother-in-law.¹

CHAP.
LXXIV.
1813.

¹ Hard. xii.
78, 83.

While Europe, shaken to its centre by the dreadful catastrophe of the Moscow campaign, was thus breaking up into new alliances, and separate interests were beginning to alienate from each other the members of the great war confederacy which had sprung from the military triumphs of the French Revolution, Prussia, which, placed in the front of the battle, had drawn the sword and thrown away the scabbard, was straining every nerve to augment her military force. Already a proclamation had announced the dissolution of the Confederacy of the Rhine, and called upon all the members of it to join in the great league formed for the deliverance of Germany.* To increase the general fervour, Frederick William at the same time instituted a new order, called that of the *Iron Cross*, to reward his subjects for the sacrifices which they were urged to make on behalf of their country; and invited all classes to pour their gold and silver ornaments into the public treasury, where they

97.
Energetic
measures of
Prussia in
support of
the war.
Institution
of the order
of the Iron
Cross.
March 19.

March 12.

* "The motto of Alexander and Frederick is, 'Honour and our country.' Every German worthy of the name should unite with us, and second with his blood, and his whole worldly goods, the efforts making for the liberation of Germany. Every one who shall prove himself a traitor to the cause of the fatherland, deserves to be annihilated by the force of public opinion, and the power of the arms taken up in its holy cause."—*Proclamation, 19th March 1813*; HARD. xii. 41, 42.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

April 6.

¹ Hard. xii.
42, 43.

would receive iron ones, fashioned in the same form, to preserve in their families as memorials at once of past wealth and present patriotism. Shortly afterwards a proclamation was issued to the former subjects of Prussia, who had been wrested from her by the treaty of Tilsit, inviting them to take up arms for the independence of Germany; and that proclamation, secretly circulated by the members of the Tugendbund, was received with avidity, and read with transport.¹

98.
And universal
enthusiasm which
prevailed.

The Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia immediately appeared in public, decorated with the new order, which was placed on the breast of the former, beside the medal of 1812. The scholars of the universities, the professors, the burghers, alike took up arms; the cares of interest, the pursuits of science, the labours of education, were forgotten. Art was turned only to warlike preparation; genius to fanning the universal ardour; industry to forging the implements of destruction. Körner gave vent to the general enthusiasm in strains of immortal verse, which were repeated by thousands and tens of thousands as they joyously marched to the points of rendezvous. Women, young and old alike, universally sent their precious ornaments to the public treasury, and received in return similar bijoux, beautifully worked in iron, which soon decorated their bosoms, bearing the simple inscription,—“I gave gold for iron, 1813.”* In a short time none but old men and boys were to be met in the streets; not an ornament, except those of iron, was to be seen either in dress or in the shops.² Two hundred

² Hard. xii.
42, 43. Pi-
zarro's let-
ter to Ma-
drid, Nov.
12, 1813.
Ibid. xii.
App. A.

* “It is impossible,” said an eyewitness, “not to be electrified on beholding the ardour with which the people give vent to the national enthusiasm, so long stifled under the yoke of an ignominious policy, or overawed by the terrors of the French legions. The King's sister has sent all her ornaments to the public treasury; and at this instant, all the women, sacrificing their most precious objects, are hastening to send them, down to the minutest articles, for the same patriotic purpose. When I say *all* the women, I in no degree exaggerate; for I do not believe you can find one exception, save in the most indigent class, who do not possess a single golden ornament. All the marriage ornaments have been laid on the altar of the country, and the government has given in

thousand ardent and impassioned men were soon in arms. Thence has arisen the famous order of the Iron Cross in Prussia, and the beautiful Berlin bronze ornaments, so well-known and highly prized in every country of Europe. It must be confessed that chivalry cannot boast of a nobler fountain of honour, nor fashion of a more touching memorial of virtue.

CHAP.
LXXIV.
1813.

Wonderful as were the efforts made at this period by France, on its side too, to repair the disasters of the Russian campaign, and assert the national independence ; and clearly as they will ever rank this among the brightest eras of its long and glorious annals ; to the sober eye of historic observation it was already apparent, what the event soon demonstrated, that, though overflowing with the martial passions, and not yet wholly drained of the physical strength of war, the empire was almost destitute of that durable resolution, that disinterested ardour, which, springing from a sense of moral obligation, independent of individual ambition, prepares men to discharge their duty alike in the shade of adverse as in the sunshine of prosperous fortune. The forces of the French empire, however vast and unprecedented, were stimulated by no other passions but those of temporal ambition ; the power of the Emperor, immense as it was, owed its ascendancy entirely to the influence of worldly success. While victory attended their efforts, the hosts of warriors who clustered round the imperial eagles were faithful to their sovereign, brave in arms, indefatigable in exertion ; but it is not while “ fanned by conquest’s crimson wing,” that the real motives of human conduct can be made apparent.

99.
Moral weakness of the French empire, notwithstanding its immense physical resources.

exchange others of iron, with the inscription,—‘I gave gold for iron, 1813.’ These ornaments, so precious from the moral interest of their origin, have already acquired a certain intrinsic value from the beauty of their workmanship, which exceeds that of any other people. These iron ornaments cannot as yet be purchased ; they are obtained only in exchange for gold. The streets are filled with nothing but women, old men, and children ; not an unwounded man, capable of bearing arms, is to be seen. A barren land of sand, covered with pines, exhibits the astonishing spectacle of two hundred thousand men in arms.”—PIZARRO’S *Letter*, 12th November 1813 ; HARD. xii. 565, 567.

CHAP.
LXXIV.

1813.

Ambition then often produces the same effects on external conduct as devotion, selfishness as patriotism, the passion for distinction as the heroism of duty. It is adversity that is the real touchstone of virtue ; it is the breath of affliction that lays bare the human heart. The inhabitants of France, since the Revolution, have never been able to stand this searching ordeal ; that dreadful event closed the fountain from which alone the strength to endure it could have been derived. Resplendent when glittering in the sunshine of victory, invincible when fanned by the gales of conquest, the empire of Napoleon withered and perished under the blast of misfortune. The high resolves, the enduring constancy, the heroic self-denial of patriotic resistance, did not exist among its vast and varied inhabitants. All the springs which the world can furnish to sustain the fortunes of a state, were in full activity, and worked with consummate ability : but those were wanting, without which, in the hour of trial, all the others are but as tinkling brass—a belief in God, a sense of duty, and a faith in immortality.

CHAPTER LXXV.

CAMPAIGN OF LÜTZEN AND BAUTZEN.

MARCH 11—JUNE 4, 1813.

As long as the French troops maintained their footing on the left bank of the Elbe, the general fermentation there was limited to a sort of passive resistance, which nevertheless proved extremely embarrassing to the imperial authorities. The people did not openly take up arms, or resist their present sovereigns ; but they did all in their power to avoid their exactions. The peasants fled to the woods to shun the conscription ; and not a few upon whom the lot had fallen, secretly in the night, by devious ways, crossed the Elbe, and joined the patriot ranks of Germany. When the Allies, however, had passed that river, and the continued advance of the Russians inspired general confidence in the firmness and constancy of the Emperor Alexander, these feelings could no longer be suppressed. Insurrections ensued in many places, particularly Bremen, and various parts of Westphalia ; and the light bodies of Russian horse who traversed the sandy plains of Northern Germany, were swelled by crowds of volunteers, who followed their standards, and greatly augmented the Prussian ranks. At the same time, the officers of the states in the Rhenish confederacy, who had been made prisoners in the Moscow campaign, with the consent of the government of St Petersburg, formed themselves into a legion ; declared traitor to his country

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

1.

Fermenta-
tion on the
left bank of
the Elbe.Atlas,
Plates 39,
85.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Hard. xii.
52, 57.
Schoell, x.
191, 195.

2.
Formation
of the land-
wehr and
landsturm
in Prussia.

² *Ante*, ch.
lxxiv. § 24.

14th and
19th March.

every German who should bear arms against his brethren ; and bound themselves by a solemn oath to combat Napoleon even to death. The Tugendbund was the soul of this vast conspiracy, the ramifications of which were so extensive, its proceedings so secret, and its influence so great, that it would have been in the highest degree dangerous, if it had not been directed in its principal branches by exalted wisdom, and inspired in all by devoted patriotism. A Cromwell or a Napoleon would have found in its impassioned bands the ready elements of revolutionary elevation : but none such appeared in the Fatherland ; and the streams of popular enthusiasm, directed by, not directing, the rulers of the land, instead of being wasted in the selfishness of individual ambition, were turned in one overwhelming flood against the enemies of the state.^{1*}

The wisdom and foresight of the Prussian government turned to the very best account this astonishing outburst of national enthusiasm. It was not suffered to evaporate, as in Spain, in detached efforts, or ill-directed expeditions ; undisciplined courage was not, as there, brought up to be slaughtered by experienced prowess ; ages of corruption had not paralysed years of enthusiasm. Previous preparation, prophetic wisdom, had prepared the fit channels for national fervour. In addition to the great augmentation made to the regular army by the decrees of the 9th and 12th February, already mentioned,² still more decisive measures were taken, as soon as the alliance with Russia was resolved on, to draw forth the whole military power of the state. By a royal decree of the 14th and 19th March, the LANDWEHR and LANDSTURM were every-

* Some statesmen, not without reason, apprehended serious ultimate danger from the ungovernable impulses of this popular enthusiasm ; but Stein rightly foresaw that it would soon be absorbed, and turned into the right channel, amidst the tumult of war. He replied to their representation,—“Die kanonen und die trompeten wird das schon zuricht blasen.” “The cannon and the trumpets will soon blow that right.”—MAURICE ARNDT to FREDERICK ARNDT, 24th April 1813 ; *Deutsche Pandora*.

where called out: the former being a sort of militia, which was for the time put on permanent duty, and soon became nearly equal to the regular soldiers; the latter, a levy *en masse* of the whole male population capable of bearing arms. The first speedily produced a hundred and twenty thousand men, who did good service, not only in recruiting the ranks of the regular army, but by relieving them of the duty of blockading fortresses, watching prisoners, and guarding convoys, which otherwise might have occasioned a serious diminution in the forces which they could bring into the field against the enemy. This body was, in a peculiar manner, serviceable to Prussia, in consequence of the number of her important fortresses which still remained in the hands of the French. By its means, with the aid of a comparatively small body of Russians, a hundred thousand Prussian landwehr kept seventy thousand French veterans blockaded and useless in the fortresses on the Vistula and the Oder.¹

An animated proclamation by the King, on the 19th March, roused to the highest degree the military spirit of his people. "Victory," said Frederick William, "comes from God. Prove worthy of His protection, by your discipline and the exemplary discharge of your duties. Let courage, patience, fidelity, and discipline, ever distinguish you. Imitate the example of your ancestors; show yourselves worthy of them, and think of your posterity. Rewards are secured for those who distinguish themselves; shame and punishment await him who neglects his duty. Your King will never quit you; the princes of his house will be with him, and combat in the midst of your ranks: the whole nation will join in your efforts. We have for an ally a brave people, who have achieved their independence by their valour, and have now come to give it to you. They had confidence in their sovereign—in his just cause, in his power—and God gave them victory. Imitate them; for we also combat for liberty and our country. Trust in God. Courage

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Hard. xii.
42. Schoell's
Recueil, iv.
323.

3.
Animated
proclama-
tion by the
King to his
people.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

and patriotism are inscribed on our banners." The views of Bernadotte at this period were equally decided. On 23d February, in a conversation with M. de Tarruch, the Russian ambassador, he said—"Tell your master that I shall disembark in six weeks in Germany at the head of thirty-five thousand Swedes, as many Russians, and ten thousand Germans. If the King of Prussia desires it, I will land on any part of his territories which he chooses. The time has come when Prussia must decide. We are agreed that Prussia should be made a great power, in order that no preponderating force should exist in Germany."¹

¹ Schoell's
Recueil, iv.
323. Hard.
xii. 42, 44.
Bignon, xi.
366.

4.
Positions
of the
French on
the Elbe
when the
Russians
crossed it.

Encouraged by so many concurrent circumstances, which facilitated their progress and promised them support, the Russian and Prussian generals soon deemed it safe to cross the Elbe. The positions which the French army occupied along the course of that river, from Dresden to Hamburg, were as follows:—Davoust, with the 11th corps, held Dessau, and the adjoining banks of the Elbe from thence to Torgau; Victor, with the 2d corps, lay between the Elbe and the Saale; Grenier, with his as yet untouched Italians, was a little in the rear at Halle; while Reynier, with the remains of the Saxons and Durutte's division, occupied the important post of Dresden, and stretched to the foot of the Bohemian mountains. The extreme left wing, under Vandamme, with its headquarters at Bremen, still occupied Hamburg and the mouth of the Elbe. The earliest reinforcements from France, under Lauriston, drawn from the first ban of the National Guards, twenty-four thousand strong, arrived at Magdeburg in the end of March, and raised the centre of the army, grouped around that fortress, to nearly fifty thousand combatants; while twenty thousand were in the neighbourhood of Dresden, and fifteen thousand on the Lower Elbe.² In addition to these imposing forces, Ney and Marmont each commanded a corps of reserve, which was forming on the Rhine, and Bertrand's corps was in

March 29.

² Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
16, 17. Jom.
iv. 262, 263.
Schoell,
Hist. x. 208,
209.

march from Italy by the route of the Tyrol, its leading columns having already reached Augsburg in the Bavarian plains.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

Troops also, important from their numerical amount, though far removed from the theatre of action, and confined in strongholds, where they could contribute little to the issue of the conflict, still belonged to France, in the fortresses on the Vistula and the Oder. Their number in all was not short of seventy thousand. Five-and-thirty thousand were shut up in Dantzic alone; and those in Thorn, Modlin, Zamosc, and Graudenz, on the Vistula; and in Spandau, Stettin, Cüstrin, and Glogau, on the Oder, were at least as numerous. But their condition was so miserable, and they were composed of such disjointed wrecks of the army which had gone through the Russian campaign, that not only were they wholly unfit for operations in the field, but they bore in themselves the seeds of contagion and mortality, more terrible than the sword of the enemy. The garrison of Dantzic, composed of the wreck of above a hundred regiments, of two-and-twenty different nations, was in such a state of moral and physical debility, that, notwithstanding its imposing numerical amount, it could not perform any military operations without its walls. All the other garrisons were in a similar condition. Typhus fever, the well-known and invariable attendant on human suffering, soon began to make frightful ravages in the ranks; and such was the fatigue of the soldiers, that, though they were destitute of beds, bandages, linen, and comforts of every kind, in their hospitals, yet it was indispensably necessary to leave them to repose. There they remained, accordingly, blockaded by inferior bodies of the Allied troops, ravaged by pestilence and fever, till famine or dejection induced them to surrender—a woful monument at once of the misery which Napoleon's ambition occasioned among his subjects, and of the extraordinary magnitude of the calamities consequent on his headstrong military policy,¹ which

5.
Disposition
and number
of the
French
troops in
the for-
tresses on
the Vistula
and Oder.

¹ Fain, i.
63. Hard.
xii. 113,
114.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

had thus severed from him so large a portion of his followers, when every sabre and bayonet was required on the banks of the Elbe.

6.
Dispositions
and strength
of the Prus-
sian forces.

The positions and forces of the Allies at this period were as follows :—In Silesia, twenty-five thousand Prussian regular troops, including two thousand five hundred horse, were collected under the command of General, afterwards MARSHAL BLUCHER. This was in addition to the garrisons of the fortresses, and nearly twenty thousand men whose organisation was not yet completed. The corps of York, which was coming up from East Prussia, was nominally fifteen thousand strong; but six thousand sick, the sad bequest of the Moscow campaign, encumbered its ranks, so that not more than nine thousand could be relied on for immediate operations. In addition to this, Bulow, near Berlin, was at the head of ten thousand, and five thousand lay in Pomerania; so that, without drawing any of the garrisons from the fortresses, Frederick William could bring fifty thousand combatants into the field. In addition to this, there were thirty-five thousand men in such a state of forwardness in the rear, as to be able to blockade the fortresses on the Oder, still in the hands of the enemy, or to act as a reserve to the armies in the field; and this body was constantly receiving accessions of force from the new levies, both of the line and the landwehr, which were in progress in every part of the kingdom. Thus, when hostilities commenced in the beginning of May, Prussia could bring an accession of at least eighty thousand well-disciplined troops to the Russian standards; and this force, if the campaign lasted a few months longer, might be expected to be raised to a hundred and fifty thousand.¹

¹ Schoell's
Recueil, ii.
290, 291;
and Hist.
x. 209.
Jom. iv.
263.

7.
Forces and
position of
the Rus-
sians.

The Russian armies at this period, from the effect of the great levies and unbounded enthusiasm of 1812, were much more considerable; but the battles and hardships of its dreadful campaign had thinned the ranks of the veteran soldiers, and the new levies, how extensive soever,

were in great part drawn from provinces so remote, that they could not be expected to make their appearance on the theatre of war till a very late period of the campaign. At the advanced posts in Germany, therefore, where the contest was to commence, their forces were by no means great; and, such as they were, they were scattered over an immense extent of country. Count Wittgenstein himself was at the head of thirty-six thousand men, between Berlin and Magdeburg; while thirty-three thousand more, under the command of Tettenborn, Chernicheff, Woronzoff, and Milaradowitch, were dispersed in detached parties along the course of the Elbe, from the neighbourhood of Dresden to the environs of Magdeburg. Twenty thousand, under Barclay de Tolly, were engaged in the blockade of Dantzic, Zamosc, and Thorn, on the Vistula; and a great reserve, seventy thousand strong, was forming in Poland, under the orders of Sacken. But these were still far distant, and could not possibly reach the banks of the Elbe before the end of July. Thus, seventy thousand Russians were the very utmost that could be relied on for immediate operations in Saxony; and if to them we add fifty thousand Prussians, the whole Allied force might be one hundred and twenty thousand strong. But as thirty thousand would be required to blockade the important fortresses of Magdeburg, Wittenberg, Torgau, and Königsstein, on the Elbe, it was doubtful whether more than ninety thousand could be relied on for offensive operations on the Saxon plains.¹

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

1 Précis de
la Guerre
de 1813.
Schoell,
Recueil, ii.
290, 291;
and Hist. x.
210, 211.
Jom. iv.
263.

The first blow of importance in this memorable campaign was struck in the neighbourhood of Hamburg. The fermentation in that important mercantile emporium had been very great during the whole Russian retreat; and it was only by extraordinary rigour and vigilance that General Cara St-Cyr, who commanded the French garrison, three thousand strong, had been able to maintain his authority amidst a hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, all but insurgent, by whom he was surrounded.

8.
Occupation
of Hamburg
by the
Allies.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.
March 11.

12th.

18th.

¹ Deutsche
Pandora,
72. London-
derry, 4, 5.

9.
Universal
enthusiasm
of the peo-
ple.

After Wittgenstein, however, had established himself in Berlin, Tettenborn, an active and indefatigable partisan, was detached towards the Lower Elbe with three thousand foot and three thousand Cossacks ; and at his approach, General Morand, who was stationed at Neustadt, retired towards Hamburg, which latter town was evacuated by the whole French forces on the day following. On the 18th, Tettenborn, at the head of the advanced guard of his indefatigable Cossacks, approached the town amidst the acclamations and astonishment of a vast multitude of spectators. About half a mile from the city, the Russian videttes were met by the greater part of the citizens in a body, who filled all the houses, gardens, fields, and lanes around. A tremendous hurrah accompanied their progress through this dense array, while the Cossacks, in making their way through it, sang their merry national airs.¹

At the gate of the city the magistrates appeared with its keys, while thirty maidens, clothed in white, strewed wreaths of flowers before the victors. Shouts of unbounded acclamation now arose from the countless multitude : the enthusiasm was such, that the very heavens seemed to be rent asunder by the sound. “ Long live the Russians ! Long live Alexander ! Long live Old England ! ” burst from tens of thousands of voices. The old steeples trembled with the acclamations ; the roar of artillery, and the clang of bells, gave vent in louder notes to the universal transports ; numbers wept for joy ; friends and strangers alike embraced, and wished each other joy that they had lived to see such a day.

“ Men met each other with erected look,
The steps were higher that they took ;
Friends to congratulate their friends would haste,
And long inveterate foes saluted as they past.” *

The worthy Hamburgers, in the first transports at their deliverance from the burdensome yoke which they had

* Dryden.

borne for seven years, were never weary of expressing their astonishment at the handful of men, not more than six thousand strong, by whom it had been effected. And it was not a little increased when they beheld these hardy children of the desert—Calmucks and Bashkirs—disdaining the civilised luxuries of houses and beds, pile their arms, and lie down beside their steeds in the squares of the city, with no pillow but their saddles, and no covering but their cloaks.¹

To these transports of joy, however, there speedily succeeded the chill of disappointment, and the terrors of disaster, when the reinforcements which Tettenborn had so confidently announced did not make their appearance, and it was known that Morand lay at Bremen, at no great distance, with three thousand men, meditating vengeance against the revolted patriots. Extraordinary efforts, ever since the arrival of the Russians, had been made to raise a burgher force, and put the city in a posture of defence ; but the preparations were for long miserably incomplete. There were no guns on the ramparts, the volunteers could hardly yet handle their muskets, and the utmost anxiety prevailed lest the French, stimulated by the thirst for plunder, and the desire for intimidating the insurrection by a blow at so great a community, should return and take a signal vengeance on the unhappy Hamburgers. From this calamity they were saved by an incident so extraordinary that it wears the aspect of romance. An English detachment of two hundred men from Heligoland had recently landed at the mouth of the Weser, and made themselves masters of the batteries of Bloxen and Bremerlehe at that point. Encouraged by this event, which was magnified by report into the landing of a powerful British force in the north of Germany, the people of Lüneburg, a small fortified town twenty miles from Hamburg, on the left bank of the Elbe, rose against the French authorities, and expelled their feeble garrison.² Morand instantly set out at the head of three thousand

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ W. to R.
19th March,
Deutsche
Pandora,
72. Lond.
German
Camp. 4, 5.
Year of
Liberation,
65. Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
17, 18.

10.

Insurrection
in Lüne-
burg.
April 2.

March 21.

April 1.
² Schoell, x.
210, 211.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
22, 23.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

men and six pieces of cannon, with which he quickly overcame the resistance of the yet unarmed Lüneburghers. The gates were forced, the principal inhabitants seized, and condemned to be shot next day at noon in the principal square of the city.

11.
Extraordi-
nary inci-
dent by
which the
prisoners
were de-
livered, and
Morand de-
feated.

On the following morning they were drawn out for execution, in number twenty-seven; and already the unhappy men, amidst the tears of their fellow-citizens, and in presence of the French general, had put on the fatal bandage, when a sudden hurrah was heard, and a violent discharge of musketry at the gates announced that succour was at hand. Alarmed by the unlooked-for onset, the whole French troops hastened from the place where the execution was to have taken place to the ramparts, and the prisoners were left with their eyes bandaged, and their arms bound, in the middle of the square. With speechless anxiety they and their families listened to the increasing din and tumult at the gates. For a short time the quick rattle of musketry showed that a serious action was going forward. Soon the receding throng, and numbers of wounded who were brought into the square, gave hope that the Allies were prevailing; and at length a loud shout on all sides announced that the town was carried, and deliverance was at hand. Instantly the brave Russians rushed into the centre of the square; the prisoners were unbound and restored to their weeping families; while two thousand French prisoners, in addition to a thousand killed and wounded, graced the first triumph of the arms of freedom in Germany. It was Chernicheff, Benkendorff, and Doernberg, who had united their Cossacks and light troops, and, by a forced march of fifty miles in twenty-four hours, had arrived just in time to effect this marvellous rescue. Morand, mortally wounded, was thrown down at the gates, and died next day. The prisoners whom he had ordered to be shot passed him, as he was carried along weltering in his blood, in the first moment of their deliverance.¹

¹ Vict. et
Cong. xxii.
22, 23.
Schoell,
Hist. x. 210,
211. Year
of Libera-
tion, i. 68,
79. Varn-
hagen von
Ense, 72.

Immense was the effect which this moving incident produced in the north of Germany. The romantic character of the adventure ; the rapid punishment of the oppressors ; the sudden destruction of so considerable a body of the enemy ; all contributed to swell the general enthusiasm, and soon rendered the rising as general between the Elbe and the Weser as between the former stream and the Oder. Montbrun arrived, indeed, on the day following with the division Lagrange ; and Chernicheff and his partisans being in no condition to oppose such considerable forces, withdrew from Lüneburg. But this reverse was not of long duration. Lagrange's division was soon after recalled to Magdeburg, and the whole country between the mouths of the Elbe and the Weser was evacuated by the enemy. The insurrection immediately became general in all that district ; the whole Hanse Towns took up arms and expelled the French authorities ; while all those portions of the electorate of Hanover which were evacuated by the French immediately proclaimed their beloved sovereign the King of England. A regency was formed of Hanoverian noblemen, with their headquarters at Hamburg, to direct the efforts of the newly recovered territory. The universal cry was for arms, to the desire for which the unnecessary cruelties of the retreating French columns, especially in the neighbourhood of Bremen, powerfully contributed. This desire met with a responsive echo in the British heart. The English government made the most extraordinary efforts to forward muskets, ammunition, and all the muniments of war, to those points on the north of Germany where they were required ; and so well was their zeal seconded by the efforts of the authorities at Woolwich and the manufacturers at Birmingham, that in the short space of two months after the intentions of Prussia were first known, there were landed on the coast of Germany, for the use of the Russian, Prussian, and Swedish governments,¹ the entire military equipments of a hundred and

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

12.

General insurrection between the Elbe and the Weser.

April 3.

¹ Lond. p. 8, and App. No. 1. Ann. Reg. 1813, 119. Vict. et Cong. xxii. 22, 23.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

13.
Advance of
the Allies to
the Elbe.
March 29.

fifty thousand men; while the Elbe, crowded with the pendants of all nations, had already resumed its place as one of the principal commercial estuaries of Europe.*

While the Hanse Towns, and the maritime portions of Hanover, the favourite thirty-second military division of the French empire, were thus gliding away from the grasp of Napoleon—both parties, having to a certain degree concentrated their forces, were preparing to strike redoubtable blows on the plains of Saxony. In the end of March, Wittgenstein broke up from Berlin and moved towards the Elbe in two columns; one, under himself in person, directing its steps towards Wittenberg—the other, under Bulow, advancing towards Dessau. At the same time Borstel, with fifteen thousand Prussians, formed the blockade of Magdeburg; and Blucher and Winzingerode, with the army of Silesia, twenty-five thousand strong, and ten thousand Russians, advanced towards Dresden from the side of Breslau. The King of Saxony, in no condition to withstand forces so considerable, entered into a convention for the evacuation of his capital; and Davoust, who commanded the French garrison, after blowing up, to the great grief of the inhabitants, an arch of their beautiful bridge over the Elbe,† retired with his

* The British military stores landed from March 18th, to May 18th, 1813, in Northern Germany, were as follows:—

Field-pieces complete, with carriages		Linen shirts,	.	.	58,000
and caissons,	218	Gaiters,	.	.	87,190
Muskets and bayonets,	124,119	Sets of accoutrements,	.	.	90,000
Swords,	34,443	Knapsacks complete,	.	.	63,457
Suits of uniform complete, with		Caps and feathers,	.	.	100,000
great-coats, &c.,	150,000	Pairs of stockings,	.	.	69,624
Boots and shoes,	175,000	Pounds of biscuit,	.	.	702,000
Blankets,	114,000	Do. of beef and pork,	.	.	691,000

—See *Official Statement in PRINCE HARDENBERG'S Report, 29th Sept. 1813, in LONDONDERRY'S War in Germany.* Appendix, No. I. p. 366.

† A proclamation of the French marshal had announced, that at the signal of three guns being fired, all the inhabitants should keep their houses; some, nevertheless, attracted by curiosity, repaired to the banks to witness the work of destruction. On the train being fired, a serpentine light wound round the undermined buttress, and immediately after the whole was enveloped in smoke: a dazzling light next rose out of the cloud, followed by a burst of fire, which ascended to the heavens; the arches adjacent were soon seen to gape, rise a

forces in the direction of Leipsic. On the day following, the Allies entered with drums beating and colours flying, amidst the enthusiastic acclamations of an immense crowd of spectators; for though the court of Dresden remained faithful to its engagements with Napoleon, the Saxon people, who had suffered immensely from the long-continued presence and passage of the French troops, were almost unanimously ranged on the opposite side, and their hearts beat as high as any in Germany for the deliverance of the Fatherland.¹*

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

March 26.

¹ Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
23. Odele-
ben, ii. 80,
81. Témoin
Oculaire,
80. Fain, i.
121. Bign.
xi. 439.

Wittgenstein's approach to the Elbe was preceded by numerous proclamations, in which he called on the Saxons to join the great effort now making for the freedom of Germany.† The tone of these popular addresses is well worthy of attention. They show how completely the principles of the contest had changed sides; how thoroughly military despotism had engrafted itself on democratic ambition, and that the French Revolution

14.
Wittgen-
stein's ap-
proach to
the Elbe.

little, and instantly fall into the waves beneath, with a crash louder than the loudest thunder. This beautiful bridge, so well known to travellers, was begun in 1344; but it was brought to perfection in 1737 by Augustus II. It is 550 feet long, resting on seventeen buttresses and sixteen arches, with an iron balustrade and broad foot-pavement. — See *Témoin Oculaire des Evénements à Dresde en 1813*, pp. 80, 81; ODELEBEN, ii. 80, 81.

* "On the 26th April, a Saxon battalion, which had surrendered in Thuringia, and to which at Altenburg its arms and artillery had been restored, defiled with drums beating and colours flying before the hotel of the King of Prussia, and was reviewed by the two Allied monarchs." — *Récit de ce qui s'est passé à Dresde en 1813, par un Témoin Oculaire*, 112.

† "Germans!" said he, "we open to you the Prussian ranks: you will there find the son of the labourer placed beside the son of the prince; all distinction of rank is effaced in these great ideas—the King, liberty, honour, country! Amongst us there is no distinction but that of talent, and of the ardour with which we fly to combat for the common cause. Liberty or death! These are the rallying-words of the soldiers of Frederick William. Saxons! Germans! from the great era of 1812, our genealogical trees will count for nothing; the exploits of our ancestors are effaced by the degradation of their descendants. The regeneration of Germany can alone produce new noble families, and restore their lustre to those which were before illustrious. He who is not for liberty is against it; choose between our fraternal embrace and the point of our victorious swords. Rise, Saxons! Free your King from his fetters; exterminate the stranger from the land; and may you soon have a free King, and may he reign over a free people!" — WITTGENSTEIN to the SAXONS, 23d and 30th March 1813; SCHOELL, *Recueil*, i. 352 and 357.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

was henceforward to be combated, in a great measure, with its own weapons. They produced an extraordinary impression in the Saxon provinces. In proportion as the French troops evacuated the villages, the inhabitants instantly rose and joined the invaders. Everywhere the Tugendbund had in secret paved the way for their reception; and almost before the banners of Napoleon were out of sight, the landwehr and the landsturm were organised, and a fearful patriotic warfare was springing up out of the sufferings and indignation of the people. If the French columns remeasured their steps, or the chances of war again threw the insurgent villages into the hands of the enemy, the inhabitants fled at their approach; the flour and grain were destroyed; barrels of every sort of liquor pierced and run out; the mills and boats burned and scuttled; and the proclamations of the Allied sovereigns met with as ready obedience in the territories of the princes of the Rhenish confederacy as in their own dominions.¹

¹ Fain, i. 107, 108. Schoell, i. 352, 357.

15.
Combat of
Mockern,
and retreat
of Eugene
across the
Elbe.
April 4.

Previous to finally withdrawing across the Elbe, Eugene, in order to oblige the enemy to concentrate his forces, that he might thus attain an accurate idea of their amount, took post at Mockern, a little in front of Magdeburg, and there stood firm. Wittgenstein accordingly collected his troops, and on the 4th April attacked the French with great vigour between Mockern and Leitzkau. It was rather an affair of advanced posts than a regular battle; for no sooner were the French tirailleurs, who as usual behaved with the greatest gallantry, driven in, than the main body of their army began to retire. In this movement, however, they felt severely the superiority of the Allied horse. Two French regiments of lancers, who strove to protect the retreat, were thrown into confusion, and for the most part made prisoners; and it was only by the fortunate occurrence of nightfall that a total rout was prevented, and the troops succeeded in making good their way to Magdeburg. Next day Wittgenstein

April 5.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

continued the pursuit, and leaving Bulow's troops to blockade that fortress, and Kleist with his Prussians before Wittenberg, took post himself at Dessau. Meanwhile Winzingerode, having merely passed through Dresden, pushed on to Halle, which he occupied in strength; upon which Eugene, to preserve his communications with Frankfort and the great road to the Rhine, concentrated his troops on the Upper Saale, leaving only a portion of his army at Magdeburg. The conduct of General Thielman, who commanded the Saxon garrison of Torgau, was at this period the subject of great anxiety. Distracted between duty to his sovereign and to his country, he did not openly join the Allies, but refused to admit Reynier with a French garrison, sent to replace him, and waited behind his formidable ramparts for the guidance of ulterior events. But, though the line of the Elbe was broken through at its two extremities, at Dresden and Hamburg, and doubt existed as to the fidelity of the Saxon garrisons, Eugene, boldly maintaining his ground in the centre, and resting on the strong fortress of Magdeburg, still made good his post, undismayed alike by external calamity and internal defection.¹

¹ Fain, i.
120, 123.
Schoell,
Hist. x. 211.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
24, 26.

What mainly contributed to support the spirits of the French soldiers amidst the multiplied disasters with which they were oppressed, was the prospect of being speedily joined by the Emperor, and the powerful reinforcements which he was bringing up from the Rhine. In effect Napoleon, who, in his address to the legislative body on the 23d March, had announced his speedy departure for the army, had recently completed all the arrangements requisite before setting out for the theatre of war. Letters-patent were addressed to the Empress, conferring on her the office and dignity of regent, with the seat of president of the council of state, and the power of pardon consequent on that exalted station; but without the right of sanctioning any decree of the senate, or proclaiming any law. On the same day, she was

16.
Napoleon's
measures
before set-
ting out for
the army.

March 20.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

invested with the elevated office with great pomp, and received the homage of the principal dignitaries of the empire. It was Napoleon's intention to have set out immediately after this imposing ceremony; but the importance of the negotiations with Austria, and the incomplete state of the preparations on the Rhine and the Elbe, retarded his departure for a fortnight longer. During this important interval, he strained every nerve to engage the cabinet of Vienna in a separate and sincere alliance, and offered to renew the treaty offensive and defensive, and even offered to pay for the thirty thousand men, whom Austria had agreed to furnish by the treaty of 1812. Even then, however, he declared his resolution not to abandon one village of the grand-duchy of Warsaw to the Russians; and though he professed his willingness to consider the abandonment of some provinces annexed to France by imperial decrees, he announced his determination not to surrender those which had been incorporated with the Great Nation by decrees of the senate, which comprehended by far the most important part of his acquisitions.* At length, on the 15th April, he bade adieu to the Empress and the King of Rome, and set out for the Rhine, having previously thus explained his views of the approaching campaign to the Austrian ambassador, Prince Schwartzemberg.—“I set out, and I will send orders to your lieutenant-general Frimont, at the same time, to denounce the armistice. I will be in person, on the first days of May, with three hundred thousand men, on the right bank of the Elbe. Austria may increase her forces at Cracow at the same time to a hundred and fifty thousand, and assemble thirty or forty thousand in Bohemia; and the day that I arrive at Dresden we shall debouch all at once on the Russians. It is thus we shall succeed in pacifying Europe.”¹

Napoleon arrived at Mayence at midnight on the 16th,

¹ Fain, i. 125, 127, and 315. *Pièces Just.* Thib. ix. 245. Bignon, xi. 436.

* *Napoleon à l'Empereur d'Autriche*, 8th April 1813. BIGNON, xi. 315, 316.

and remained there eight days. They were anything, however, but days of rest to the indefatigable monarch. Everything immediately assumed a new aspect, and his ardent mind communicated its energy to all the subordinate authorities by whom he was surrounded. The fortifications of the fortress were repaired with extraordinary vigour during the whole of April, and crowds of labourers from the whole neighbourhood collected for that purpose. Those from the left bank of the Rhine received pay; those from the right, or German side, nothing. Great, however, as were the efforts made to put this frontier fortress in a respectable posture of defence, they were as nothing compared to the exertions at the same time going on to collect and forward troops to reinforce the army. The accounts from Thuringia and the banks of the Saale were daily becoming more alarming. The Elbe had been crossed at many points; the enemy's light troops were advancing in all directions; Leipsic and Nuremberg were in their hands; Erfurth itself was menaced; terror, the forerunner of disaster, had already brought in imagination the Russians down to the Rhine. Nor was the political horizon less gloomy. Austria had assumed a position more than doubtful. Even the offer which Napoleon had made to the cabinet of Vienna, to restore Silesia to the Imperial crown, had been refused, on the ground, in itself sufficiently ominous, that they could consent to no aggrandisement at the expense of Prussia. The Austrian government had recovered from the dread of Russia which had led Metternich in January, to declare to M. Otto, "that it was not France which they feared, but the Muscovite power which Napoleon had done so much to augment." The sudden and extraordinary resurrection of that wonderful man's power, after a disaster which would have entirely prostrated any other monarch, had opened the eyes of the cabinet of Vienna to the real danger which still threatened them.¹ At the same time the King of Saxony, distracted between

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

17.

Arrival of
Napoleon at
Mayence,
and great
prepara-
tions there.

¹ Odel. i.
27. Thib.
ix. 254.
Schoell, x.
212. Bign.
xi. 313.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

a conscientious regard to his engagements, and the daily increasing enthusiasm of his subjects and troops in favour of the Allied cause, repaired to Prague, where there was every reason to apprehend that his policy would be determined by that of the cabinet of Vienna.

18.
Napoleon's
efforts to
augment
his forces
there.

In these critical circumstances, when every day and hour was not only of importance in order to withstand the Allied forces actually in the field, but to prevent the accession of new and still more formidable powers to their league, the energy of Napoleon seemed to rise with the difficulties against which he had to contend, and to acquire an almost supernatural degree of vigour. In every direction, officers were despatched to hasten the march, and collect the still unformed bodies of the conscripts, who, before they were able to handle their muskets, were hurried off to the Rhine; while the Emperor, as they passed through Mayence, seemed to count the numbers of even the smallest bodies of men who crossed its bridge, and endeavoured to inspire the young novices in arms with a portion of his own ardent and unconquerable spirit. But this searching inspection demonstrated how much was yet to be done to restore the efficiency of the French military establishment, and told but too clearly that the Grand Army had irrevocably sunk amidst the disasters of Russia.¹

¹ Odel. i. 17,
18. Schoell,
Recueil, ii.
300.

19.
Defective
appearance
of the troops
which cross-
ed the
bridge of
Mayence.

Notwithstanding the most strenuous efforts to augment that important branch of the service, the number of cavalry which crossed by the bridge of Mayence had not yet exceeded four thousand; and when it was recollected how completely the ranks of horse had been swept away during the Moscow campaign, and how powerful the Allies were in that arm, this circumstance afforded a melancholy presage as to the issue of the contest which was impending. Nor was the condition of the greater part of the infantry and artillery more encouraging. Though strong in numbers, and animated with courage, they were weak in all the other qualities which constitute

the strength of an army. The youths who had been torn from their homes to recruit the armies, hurried forward to the frontier by forced marches which were beyond their strength, and emaciated by the scanty and unwholesome food which they had received on the way, presented in great part the most miserable aspect. Before they ever saw the enemy, their ranks exhibited nearly as woful an appearance as those of the veterans who had survived the horrors of the Moscow campaign. The "uniformity of ills," so well known in armies, and of such sinister presage when not surmounted by unwonted mental vigour, or a sudden tide of success, was already visible; and though the patriotic ardour of the young conscripts carried them in a surprising manner through their difficulties, and they evinced extraordinary enthusiasm when passing the Emperor, yet it was but too manifest that they were unequal to the fatigues of the approaching campaign. It was painfully evident that, though they might possibly prove victorious in regular battles, they would melt away under the effects of dripping bivouacs, or the horrors of military hospitals.¹

The condition of the cavalry and artillery, with the exception of that of the Guard, was still more deplorable. The unfortunate quadrupeds which were harnessed to the guns, or placed beneath the unskilled riders who had been pressed into the ranks, felt none of the enthusiasm which supported the human conscripts; and the accumulated evils of forced marches, bad provender, and cold beds on the ground, fell upon them with unmitigated severity. So strongly had the evils of a long line of detached carriages been felt in Russia, that they now went into the other extreme. Strict orders had been given to keep the guns, vehicles, and columns close to each other: wherever the ground permitted it, they spread the columns over the fields adjoining the road. The cavalry, infantry, artillery, staff, and waggon train, all marched pell-mell, and often in the most frightful

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Odel. i. 17,
19. Témoin
Oculaire,
300, 301.
Schoell,
Recueil, ii.
300.

20.
Bad condi-
tion of his
cavalry and
artillery.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

confusion ; while the cry constantly repeated by the officers, "Close up ! close up !" occasioned a perpetual shake and agitation in the ranks. Such enormous assemblages of men in so narrow a compass soon consumed the whole provisions which could be extracted from the inhabitants on the roadside. Pillage in consequence became unavoidable in the adjoining districts on the part of the succeeding columns ; and the army thus speedily collected together, without adequate previous preparations, suffered nearly as much before arriving on the Elbe, as they had done in the preceding campaign from the march through Lithuania. Notwithstanding all these unfavourable circumstances, however, the confidence of Napoleon in the success of his arms had suffered no abatement. "Were the last man of the Grand Army," said he, "drowned in passing the Niemen, we should not the less be able in spring to take the field with the superiority over our enemies."¹

¹ Odel. i. 18,
24. Fain, i.
323, 324.
Napoleon to
Metternich,
January 8,
1813. Bigu.
xi. 315.

21.
Forces of
Napoleon
at this pe-
riod.

Napoleon left Mayence on the 24th, and arrived at Erfurth the succeeding day. The army, which by extraordinary efforts he had there collected, though without any adequate cavalry or artillery, was extremely formidable in point of numbers. His troops were divided into fourteen corps, besides the Imperial Guard and reserve cavalry ; and their total amount in the course of the campaign came to be little less than four hundred thousand men. In the outset, however, it was not more than half the number ; and a hundred and fifteen thousand men only could be brought into the field at Lützen.*

* *French Troops at the Battle of Lützen.*

Infantry of the Guard,	.	.	.	10,000
Cavalry of the Guard,	.	.	.	5,000
3d corps, Marshal Ney,	.	.	.	40,000
4th corps, General Bertrand,	.	.	.	20,000
6th corps, Marshal Marmont,	.	.	.	25,000
11th corps, Marshal Macdonald,	.	.	.	15,000

Grand total, . 115,000

—SCHOELL, *Traité de Paix*, vol. x. p. 213.

[Continued.]

A considerable portion of the general array, though all collected in the depots in the interior, had not yet reached the theatre of action ; and three corps were swallowed up in the garrisons of Dantzic, those of the fortresses on the Oder, and on the Lower Weser and Elbe. The corps, however, which were under the Emperor's immediate command, or so near as to be available even at the outset of the campaign — viz. those of Ney at Weimar, of Marmont at Gotha, of Bertrand at Saalfeld, and of Oudinot at Coburg, with the Guards and reserve cavalry — amounted to a hundred and forty thousand effective men, independent of forty thousand under Prince Eugene, which were still in the neighbourhood of Magdeburg. The strength of this immense host, however, consisted in its infantry : it had as yet only three hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, though that number was doubled before the close of the campaign, and could only muster six thousand horse—a poor set-off to nearly thirty thousand superb cavalry, which glittered in the ranks of the enemy.¹

¹ Jom. iv.
270, 272.
Fain, i. 323,
325. Viet. et
Cong. xvii.
33, 34.

Although the forces which the Allies brought into the field in the latter part of the contest, when Austria had joined the alliance, were much more considerable, and,

*Total French Forces in the Field in Germany, at the opening
of the Campaign.*

Infantry of the Guard,	.	.	.	10,000
Cavalry of the Guard,	.	.	.	5,000
2d corps, Victor,	.	.	.	7,400
3d corps, Ney,	.	.	.	40,000
4th corps, Bertrand,	.	.	.	20,000
5th corps, Lauriston,	.	.	.	15,000
6th corps, Marmont,	.	.	.	25,000
7th corps, Reynier,	.	.	.	14,000
11th corps, Macdonald,	.	.	.	15,000
12th corps, Oudinot,	.	.	.	25,000
1st corps of cavalry, Latour Maubourg,	.	.	.	10,000
2d corps of cavalry, Sebastiani,	.	.	.	6,210
1st corps, Davoust, detached,	.	.	.	10,000
Grand total,	.	.	.	202,610
Total cannon,	.	.	.	350

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

22.

Inferiority
of the Allies
at the open-
ing of the
campaign.¹ Fain, i.
324. Jom.
iv. 273.
Schoell,
Recueil, ii.
290, 291.

even in its opening stages, were more powerful in cavalry and veteran troops, yet at this period they were decidedly inferior in numbers to their opponents.* So distant were the resources of the Russians, so incomplete as yet the preparations of Prussia, that at the opening of the campaign they could only collect a hundred and ten thousand regular troops, of which forty thousand were absorbed in blockading the fortresses on the Elbe and the Oder; leaving little more than seventy thousand to meet the shock of battle on the plains of Saxony. In these circumstances, it appeared to many a hazardous and imprudent step to cross the Elbe, of which the whole fortresses were still in the hands of the enemy, and venture into the Saxon plains in presence of Napoleon, who had the command of a force twofold more numerous.¹ There were

* *Allied troops at the Battle of Lützen.*

RUSSIANS.			
Corps of Lieutenant-General Berg,	.	.	7,450
Corps of Lieutenant-General Winzingerode,	.	.	10,525
Corps of reserve of General Tormasoff,	.	.	17,850
Artillery sent to the aid of Blucher,	.	.	450
Total,	.	.	35,775
PRUSSIANS.			
Corps of Blucher,	.	.	23,850
Corps of General York,	.	.	10,000
Detached corps of St Priest,	.	.	2,800
Total,	.	.	36,150
Total, Russians,	.	.	35,775
Grand total, Allies,	.	.	71,925

—PLOTTO, vol. i. App. 114.

Allied Forces in Germany at the opening of the Campaign.

RUSSIANS—DETACHED CORPS ON THE ELBE.

	Men.	Horses.
Detachment of Tettenborn,	1,579	1,685
Detachment of Doernberg,	1,844	505
Detachment of Chernicheff,	1,985	1,992
Corps of Woronzoff,	5,450	
Detachment of Harpe,	2,200	
Detachment of Roth,	3,000	
Corps of Milaradowich,	11,599	
Free Corps,	3,000	
Total,	30,657	4,182

not wanting those who called to mind the fatal effects of a similar advance over the same ground, previous to the battle of Jena, seven years before.

But, on the other hand, the circumstances of the two armies at these two periods were essentially different. Napoleon was then at the head of a veteran and victorious—he now led on a newly raised, or beaten army. The Prussians, then advancing singly to the shock, were now supported by the experience, and animated by the presence, of the Russian conquerors. Seven years of oppressive rule had united every heart, and upraised every

CHAP.
LXXXV.

1813.

23.
Reasons for
crossing the
Elbe.

RUSSIANS THAT FOUGHT AT LÜTZEN.—VIZ.:

	Men.
Corps of Lieutenant-General Berg, . . .	7,450
Corps of Lieutenant-General Winzingerode, . . .	10,525
Reserve under General Tormasoff, . . .	17,350
Battery sent to the assistance of Blucher, . . .	450
Total,	35,775

RUSSIANS BETWEEN THE ELBE AND THE VISTULA.

Corps of Barclay de Tolly,	13,450
Corps of Sacken,	9,800
Army of reserve of Doctoroff,	50,000
Blockading Zamosce, General Roth,	3,000
Blockading force before Dantzic, the Prince of Würtemberg,	15,000
Blockading force before Glogau,	1,500
Total,	92,750

Summary.

Russians detached on the Elbe,	30,657
Russians who fought at Lützen,	35,775
Russians between the Elbe and the Vistula,	92,750

Russians—Grand total, 159,182

—PLOTHO, vol. i., App. 99.

PRUSSIANS.

Blucher's corps,	16,700
York's and Kleist's corps,	7,600
Reserve under Stutterheim,	3,700
In the field,	28,000
Blockading the fortresses, about	37,000
Total—Prussians,	65,000
Do.—Russians,	159,182
Grand total of Allies,	224,182

—PLOTHO, vol. i., App. 126.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

hand in the north of Germany; the superiority of the Allies in cavalry removed every reasonable ground for apprehending total defeat; and even though the forward movement might be attended with some peril, it was worth incurring, in the hope of determining the hesitation of the court of Dresden, and stimulating the favourable tendencies of the cabinet of Vienna. Influenced by these considerations, the advance of the Allies continued. Leaving the Viceroy, whose troops were concentrated between Magdeburg and the Saale, to the right, Wittgenstein crossed the Elbe in force at Dessau; and, concentrating his troops with those which had passed at Dresden, advanced to Leipsic, while his right wing occupied Halle and the adjoining villages. Meanwhile Alexander and Frederick William, leaving the headquarters at Kalisch, where such important diplomatic arrangements had been concluded, moved on to Dresden, and established themselves there on the 8th of April.¹

¹ Jom. iv.
273, 274.
Fain, i.
324, 325.
Schoell,
Recueil, ii.
290, 291.

24.

Aspect of
the Russian
and Prus-
sian troops
which enter-
ed Dresden.

If the confused and motley array of worn-out veterans and youthful conscripts, which crowded the road from Mayence to Erfurth, was descriptive of the last efforts, though still unbroken spirit, of the French empire, the hardy warriors, savage horsemen, and enthusiastic volunteers who composed the Russian and Prussian ranks, were still more characteristic of the varied nations, from the deserts of Asia to the centre of civilised Europe, who were now roused to resist them. Unbounded was the astonishment of the citizens of Dresden when the Cossacks and Calmucks, the forerunners of Winzingerode's corps, first appeared amongst them. The uncombed beards and shaggy dress of many of these nomad warriors; their long lances and hardy steeds: and, above all, the piles of plunder which they bore between their saddles and horses' backs, at first excited no small degree of terror in the minds of the citizens. This feeling was increased rather than diminished when they beheld these Asiatic warriors, singing oriental airs, pile their arms in

the streets, strew a little straw on the pavements, and lie down to rest beside the steeds, picketed to the walls, which had accompanied them from the Volga and the Don. By degrees, however, these apprehensions wore off: the uncouth warriors were found to be kindly and sober; a copious supply of brandy, bread, herrings, and onions, always put them in good humour; and soon they were to be seen carrying the children in their arms for hours together, and teaching them to speak and sing in Russian. Shortly after, these rude hosts were followed by the more regular columns of the Russian army; infantry, cavalry, and artillery succeeded each other without intermission, in the finest possible state of discipline and equipment; and when the Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia, at the head of their respective divisions of Guards, defiled over the bridge of the Elbe, and entered the city, all the spectators were lost in astonishment at the aspect of the troops, which, after undergoing the fatigues of so dreadful a campaign, appeared in all the pomp and majesty of unsullied war. Garlands of flowers were everywhere strewn on their approach; the windows were filled with rank and beauty; and the monarchs entered the town between a double rank of damsels clothed in white, bearing baskets loaded with all the beauty of spring.¹

But if the long columns of the Russian army, and the varied appearance of their troops, were descriptive of the vast extent of their empire, and the prodigious power of that enthusiasm which had brought the military force of such distant regions into the heart of Europe; still more interesting, in a moral point of view, was the aspect of the patriot bands of Prussia. The chasseurs of the Guard, in particular, excited general attention, and conveyed a lively idea, both of the sacrifices which her people had made to deliver their country, and of the heroic spirit with which they were animated. A thousand young men, almost all of the best families, marched in the ranks with ardour to battle, where more than two-

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

April 24.

¹ *Témoign
Oculaire,
85, 86, 109.
Odel. ii. 85,
110.*

25.
*Appearance
of the Prus-
sian troops.*

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

thirds of their number found an honoured grave. The bands of volunteers, clothed in black, were much more numerous. Several different provinces had contributed to form them ; and a large proportion were composed of the young men at the universities, who now took the field under the direction of the same men, as officers, to whom they had formerly listened with reverence in the professors' chairs. Several distinguished members of the universities, in particular Jahn and Staffens, appeared with a warlike air, and surrounded by a numerous train of followers. These noble bands, however, though overflowing with courage, and burning to signalise themselves, scarcely appeared broke in to a discipline sufficiently strict for the arduous duties upon which they were about to enter ; and many of them were still of such tender years as to be obviously unequal to the fatigues of a campaign. Numbers of gallant youths, too young to be admitted into the ranks, and hardly able to carry a musket, followed the regiments, supplicating to be allowed to join their elder comrades. One boy of ten years was to be seen entreating the officers of different regiments, with tears in his eyes, to receive him in the ranks of volunteers, if not as a private, at least as a drummer ; while another, only nine, was reclaimed by his parents at Breslau, by advertisement in the public newspapers.¹

¹ Tém. Ocul.
94. Odel.
ii. 93, 94.

26.
Noble spirit
by which
they were
animated.

These noble youths took the field under the sanction, and impressed with the liveliest feelings, of religious duty. It was from that holy spring that the spirit destined to combat, and ultimately conquer, the worldly passions of the French Revolution took its rise. "We marched," says one of the volunteers, the poet Körner, "in parade from Zoblen to Rogau, a Lutheran village, where the church, with great simplicity, but also with great taste, had been decorated for the convention of the volunteers. After singing a hymn of my composition, the clergyman of the parish delivered an address, full of manly vigour and public enthusiasm. Not a dry eye was to be seen in

the whole assembly. After the service, he pronounced the oath before us, for the cause of humanity, of fatherland, of religion, to spare neither substance nor soul—to conquer or die for the right. We swore! He then fell on his knees, and besought God for a blessing on His champions. It was a moment when the present thought of death kindled flame in every eye, and woke heroism in every heart. The oath, solemnly repeated by all, and sworn on the swords of the officers, and Luther's hymn, 'Ein feste burg ist unser Gott,' 'A stronghold is our God,' concluded the ceremony; upon which a thundering vivat burst from the congregation of champions for German freedom, while every blade leaped from its scabbard, and gleams of warlike light shone through the sanctuary. The hour was so much the more impressive, that most of us went out with the conviction that it was the last time we should ever meet." With such holy rites did the champions of German freedom prepare themselves for the fight. The moral world was shaken to its foundation: duty based on religion was arrayed against talent in rebellion against its Author.¹

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Körner to
Caroline
Von Pichler,
March 30,
Deutsche
Pandora,
128.

The Emperor and King lived at Dresden with the utmost simplicity, and won the hearts of all classes by the affability of their demeanour, and the readiness with which they were at all times accessible to the complaints, not only of their own troops, but of the Saxon people. Both appeared in public without guards, or ostentation of any sort. Alexander, in particular, frequently walked out attended only by an aide-de-camp, and seemed to take a pleasure in the crowds who thronged round him to such an extent, that no small difficulty was sometimes experienced in making his way through.* But it was chiefly in the

27.
Habits of
the Empe-
ror and
King at
Dresden,
and religious
spirit by
which they
were ani-
mated.

* He inhabited the beautiful Bruhl palace in the suburbs of the city, the shady walks of the garden of which had long been the favourite resort of the children of the better classes. Strict orders had been given in the first instance to close the gates against these noisy intruders; but no sooner was the Emperor informed of the deprivation to which they had been exposed, than he gave direc-

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

respect paid by themselves and their followers to the rites of religion, that the difference appeared between the Allied sovereigns and the French authorities by whom they had been preceded. The day after their entry was Easter Sunday; and it was celebrated from daybreak by the soldiers of both armies with extraordinary solemnity. The whole troops appeared in their very best and neatest attire. Everywhere the Cossacks were to be seen buying stained eggs to present to their comrades; wherever the Russians met, from the highest to the lowest rank, they gave the salute, "Christ is risen," to which the reply was, "Yes, he has risen indeed." The Emperor was the first to set this devout example; and having, after the preceding midnight, assisted at the solemn service of Easter in a little Greek chapel established in one of the apartments of the Bruhl palace, he immediately addressed that expression to every one of his officers present. Divine service was performed by the chaplains, or "*papas*" as they are called, of all the different Russian regiments quartered in Saxony. This was succeeded by a splendid review, in which a noble body of seven thousand cavalry, headed by the Archduke Constantine, who had just arrived from Pilnitz, paraded before the sovereigns at Dresden. Superficial readers may consider these incidents as trifles, but they are straws which show how the wind sets; and the reflecting observer will not deem it the least interesting incident in this memorable year, that the sovereigns and armies, which at length delivered Europe, were bound together by the common ties which unite man to his Creator.¹ After all human powers had failed in combating the forces of the Revolution, victory was at length brought back to the arms of freedom, when they went forth to the fight with the ancient war-cry of the

¹ Odel. ii.
111, 112.
Tém. Ocul.
iii.

tions to have them admitted as usual, and often walked out to divert himself with the sportive happiness of his little allies. The King of Prussia did the same at the Royal palace of Racknitz, which formed his residence.—*Témoin Oculaire*, 213; ODEL. 113.

warriors of the Cross on their banners, "In this sign you shall conquer."*

CHAP.
LXXV.

During his stay at Erfurth, Napoleon put the last hand to the organisation of his army ; gave directions for strengthening the two citadels of the town, and putting them in a posture of defence ; and established hospitals for six thousand men. Meanwhile Eugene, firm in his position between the confluence of the Saale and Elbe, and round Magdeburg, quietly awaited the approach of the Emperor, who left Erfurth early in the morning of the 28th, mounted on horseback, and commenced the campaign. The conscripts, as the long and brilliant cortège of the Emperor passed through their ranks, gazed with delight on the hero who had filled the world with his renown ; and the cheers with which he was saluted were almost as loud and general as in the most brilliant period of his career. But these animating signs died away when Napoleon had passed ; and the first day's march was sufficient to convince every observer that the ancient discipline and order of the army were at an end, and that the admirable precision of the soldiers of Ulm and Austerlitz had been buried with the grand army in the fields of Russia. The Emperor slept that night at Eckarts-berg, having passed in his journey over the field of Auerstadt, already immortalised in the annals of French glory. During the whole march, the imperial cortège was obliged to force its way, with almost brutal violence, through the dense crowd of infantry, cannon, horsemen, and waggons which encumbered the highway. Pillage had already commenced on all sides ; and the disorders of the troops not only inflicted on the unhappy inhabitants all the miseries of war, but evinced, even under the eyes of the Emperor, the relaxed discipline and imperfect organisation of his army. Under the very windows of the hotel which he inhabited, a vast crowd of disorderly

1813.

28.

Confusion
and dis-
orders on
the French
line of
march.

April 28.

* "In hoc signo vinces."

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Odel. i. 36,
37. Fain. i.
337. Jom.
iv. 275.

soldiers was collected, who, with loud shouts and dissonant cries, continued during the whole night to feed a huge fire, by throwing into it the furniture, beds, and property of the wretched inhabitants, into whose houses they had broken, and who, by a single day's presence of the imperial headquarters, found themselves deprived of their whole moveable effects.¹

29.
Approach
of the two
armies to
each other.
April 29.

The direction of Napoleon's march was determined by the important consideration of effecting a junction with the Viceroy on the banks of the Saale; and with this view he advanced next day to Naumburg; while Ney reached Weissenfels, after having driven back the Russian videttes, which now, for the first time, began to show themselves on the road. Meanwhile the Viceroy, to facilitate the junction, ascended the course of the Saale, and on the same day arrived at Merseburg; so that the two armies were now not more than twenty miles distant. Eugene's forces consisted of two corps—Lauriston's and Macdonald's—and mustered fully thirty thousand combatants, besides those left in garrison in the fortresses on the Elbe, and Victor's corps, which remained near Magdeburg. Already the thunder of their artillery was heard in the distance, and soon an aide-de-camp from the Viceroy announced the joyful intelligence to the Emperor, that his troops had passed the Saale by the bridge of Merseburg, and that a junction had been effected between the two armies. The young conscripts in Ney's corps, which formed the head of the advance, gazed with wonder on the veterans, many of them mutilated, who had survived the Moscow campaign; while they, reanimated by the sight of the dense columns which were hourly thronging to their support, forgot the horrors of the retreat, and fondly hoped that the glorious days of the grand army were about to return. Joyfully the united host moved towards the enemy, who occupied Halle, Leipsic, and all the adjacent roads, while the advanced guards were posted on the road to Weissenfels.²

April 30.
² Fain. i.
339, 341.
Jom. iv.
275. Odel.
i. 39.

No sooner were the Allies aware of the approach of the enemy in such strength, than they took measures to concentrate their forces ; but the situation of their troops was such as to afford the most serious ground for disquietude. Not more than eighty thousand men were scattered along the line of the Elbe, from the Bohemian mountains to the sea, without any other point of support than Dresden, a town which could not be said to be fortified. The bridges of Meissen, Mühlberg, and Roslau, by which they had passed, were not yet even covered by *têtes-de-pont*—Dessau alone had a tolerable bridge-head ; and the reinforcements in their rear were all absorbed in blockading the fortresses on the Elbe and the Oder. Thus it was impossible to give battle to the enemy with anything approaching to an equality of force. Yet was retreat still more hazardous, as it would weaken the moral influence which their advance had produced in Germany, and, by renewing its apprehensions, might revive all the vacillations of the cabinet of Vienna, and even induce it to throw its forces into the opposite scale. Nor were the chances of battle so unequal as they at first sight appeared. For though Napoleon was greatly superior upon the whole, it was by no means certain that his forces would all be concentrated upon one field ; the quality of the Allied troops was undoubtedly better than that of the conscripts by whom they were to be opposed ; and, above all, the great superiority of their cavalry, which was nearly twenty-five thousand strong, while that of the French was not five thousand, both precluded the possibility of total defeat, and promised the most brilliant results in case of success.¹

These considerations having induced the Allied sovereigns to risk a battle, it was no sooner ascertained that Napoleon had passed the Saale, near Weissenfels, on the 30th April, than the Russian and Prussian forces were moved forward with all imaginable expedition, to prevent his advance to Leipsic, and give him battle in the plains of

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

30.

Position and
measures of
the Allies.

¹ Précis de
la Camp.
de 1813.
Schoell, ii.
298, 301.
Fain, i. 339,
341.

31.
Combat at
Poserna.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

LÜTZEN. The Prussian army was concentrated, on the 1st May, at Röthe: Wittgenstein, with the main body of the Russians, was at Zwenkau; while Winzingerode and Milaradowich, more in advance, observed the movements of the enemy on the road from Naumburg to Chemnitz. It was in crossing the defile of Grünebach that the head of the French column first encountered the Allies, who were strongly posted with six guns on the heights of Poserna, on the opposite bank, to defend the great road, which, after descending into the valley of that name, and passing the village of Rippach, ascends the opposite steep to enter upon the great plains of Lützen and Leipsic. The inferiority of Napoleon's forces in cavalry rendered it necessary to approach this advanced guard with caution, and the French infantry moved on in squares, as at the battle of the Pyramids in Egypt.¹

¹ Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
31, 32.
Odel. i.
46. Jom.
iv. 275.

32.
Death of
Marshal
Bessièrès.
May 1.

Marshal Bessièrès, Duke of Istria, colonel of the Imperial Guards, was among the foremost of the horsemen who advanced to reconnoitre the enemy's position, when a cannon-shot killed the brigadier of his escort. "Inter that brave man," said the marshal; and hardly had the words passed his lips, when a second cannon-ball struck himself on the breast, and laid him dead on the spot.* His body was immediately covered with a white sheet, to conceal the calamity from the soldiers; and no one spoke of the event even at the imperial headquarters—an ominous practice, which commenced during the calamities of the Moscow retreat, and was continued in this campaign, from the rapid consumption of men of the highest

* Ever since the campaign of Italy, in 1796, Marshal Bessièrès had, in different ranks, commanded the Guard which accompanied Napoleon in his battles. He was one of his most esteemed lieutenants; and he deserved the Emperor's regard, as well by his military experience and ability, as by his talent for civil affairs and his fidelity to his interests. His body was embalmed, and arrived at the Hôtel des Invalides, at Paris, on the 20th May, where it was interred; and the Emperor wrote the following touching letter to his widow, who was inconsolable for his loss:—"My cousin, Your husband has died on the field of honour. The loss which you and your children have sustained is

rank and consideration by which it was characterised. Great confusion prevailed for some time at the attack of the defile on the opposite side, from the want of precision in the movements of the troops, and three hundred men were struck down in the squares without the enemy being dislodged. But at length twenty pieces of the artillery of the Guard were brought up, and under cover of their fire the leading square got through, and the Allied vanguard retired, leaving open to the enemy the entrance of the plain of Lützen. The French army occupied Lützen and the adjacent villages, where they slept; the Young Guard bivouacked round the tomb of Gustavus Adolphus; sentinels were placed, to preserve from destruction during the night the trees which shaded the grave of the hero of the north.¹

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Souv. de
Caulain-
court, i. 163.
Fain, i. 341,
343. Odel. i.
46. Jom. iv.
275, 276.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
31, 32.

Next morning the French troops, being now aware that they were in presence of the enemy, advanced in close order towards Leipsic, ready at a moment's warning to form square, to resist the formidable cavalry to which they were opposed. General Lauriston, with his corps, the advanced guard of Eugene's army, moved on the road from Merseburg. He met with no resistance till he arrived at Lindenau, the western suburb of Leipsic; but there the streets were barricaded, and the houses loop-holed. As a serious resistance was expected, the troops halted, and the fire of artillery commenced. Macdonald's corps followed on the same line, and it only was engaged in the subsequent action. On the great road from Lützen to Leipsic, the main body of the French army, under Napoleon in person, advanced in a

33.
Movements
and position
of the
French.

doubtless great; but mine is still greater. The Duke of Istria has died the noblest death, and without suffering; he has left a reputation without spot, the best inheritance he could bequeath to his children. My protection is secured to them: they will inherit all the affection which I bore to their father." When the author visited Paris, in May 1814, the lamps were burning night and day in the mausoleum of the deceased, by the affectionate care of his widow, who still daily visited and spent some time in his tomb. The King of Saxony erected a monument to Bessières, on the spot where he fell.—See FAIN, i. 344, 345; and LAS CASES, vi. 45.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Fain, i.
248, 249.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
32, 33, Jom.
iv. 276, 277.

dense array of infantry, cavalry, artillery, and chariots, crowding the road from Weissenfels to Lindenau; and it seemed hardly possible for any efforts to restore order to the prodigious accumulation of men and carriages which were there assembled. The Imperial Guard and reserve cavalry were in the neighbourhood of Lützen; Marmont's corps followed in echelon; next to him, Bertrand brought up his Italians from Nossen; behind them, between Naumburg and Weissenfels, came Oudinot's men; while Ney's dense columns covered the flank of the huge array, on the side of Pegau, as far as Lützen.¹

^{34.}
Allied
march and
plan of
attack.

May 2.

On the other hand, the Allied sovereigns, who had taken the field on the 29th April, and put themselves at the head of their respective armies, were resolved to give battle in the plains of Lützen. Not that they were insensible of the risk which they ran in combating Napoleon at the head of superior forces, especially among the thickly crowded villages of Saxony, where their magnificent cavalry would be of little avail; but political considerations of the highest importance, referring to the courts of Vienna and Dresden, forbade them to recede or act on the defensive at this particular juncture. They crossed the Elster, therefore, near Pegau, early on the morning of the 2d May, and advanced with all their forces, directing their march towards Jena, and threatening the enemy's right, so as to keep up their own communication with Bohemia and the forces of the Austrian monarchy. Their plan of attack was to refuse their own right, and make no considerable effort in the centre, but endeavour to force back the enemy's right, turn it, and cut him off from the Saale, and then inundate his rear with a numerous cavalry, to which he had no corresponding force to oppose. Blücher's Prussians were in the front; next came Wittgenstein's Russians; Winzingerode's Russians, with the Russian and Prussian Guards, and the cavalry of both armies, formed the reserve.² In this order the troops, after having enjoyed

² Précis de
la Camp.
1813.
Schoell,
Recueil, ii.
305, 306.
Lond. 20,
21. Odel. i.
47, 49.

an hour and a half's rest, advanced to the attack at one o'clock in the afternoon.

The hostile armies thus approached each other in a very peculiar manner; for both were in open column, and actually under march; and they came into collision like two men-of-war attempting to pass each other on opposite tacks. Napoleon, aware that the enemy were not far distant, but ignorant of their intentions, and not expecting them to stand firm that day, had been on horseback since nine in the morning; and he had passed the monument of Gustavus Adolphus, where he for the first time met the remnant of the Old Guard, which had escaped from the disasters in Russia, when he was first roused to a sense of his situation by the sound of artillery on his extreme left at Lindenau. He immediately halted with his suite, and surveyed the distant combat with his telescope; after which he remained half an hour in meditation, directing the troops merely to continue their march, with their ranks as close as possible. Suddenly a tremendous cannonade arose in rear of his right, in the direction of Gross and Klein Görschen; while his telescope, still directed towards Lindenau, showed him the inhabitants peaceably posted on the roofs of the houses, and no enemy's force deployed beyond the extremity of the buildings. He instantly perceived that the attack was to be expected on the other side; and Marshal Ney, observing that his corps was assailed, set off at the gallop to put himself at its head. In truth, the Emperor was now surprised in his line of march, and obliged to deliver a defensive battle with his troops scattered—the very advantage which he had so often practised on his enemies.¹

In truth, matters had assumed a serious aspect, from the very first, in that quarter. The French infantry there occupied the villages of Gross Görschen, Klein Görschen, Rahna, and Kaia, which lie near each other, somewhat in the form of an irregular square, in the plain between Lützen and Pegau. The plain is there traversed

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.
35.
Battle of
Lützen.

Atlas,
Plate 79.

¹ Odel. i. 49,
50. Fain, i.
350, 351.
Précis in
Schoell,
Recueil, ii.
305, 306.
Bign. xii.
61, 64.

36.
Commence-
ment of the
action, and
success of
the Allies
on the right.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

by the deep channel of a rivulet, called the Flossgraben, which was crossed by the whole Allied army in small compact columns, and formed a support to the right after these columns had deployed. Emerging from behind the heights, where they had taken their rest entirely concealed from the enemy's view, the Allied army, eighty thousand strong, moved on in four deep black columns, with a powerful artillery in front, which immediately commenced a heavy concentric fire upon Gross Görschen ; which the French infantry in the village sustained with the utmost intrepidity. Soon, however, it was assailed by two Prussian brigades, under General Ziethen, with such vigour, that, after a gallant resistance, Souham's division, which was charged with its defence, was driven out and pursued to some distance. The brave Prussians, burning with ardour, followed up their success with great impetuosity ; Klein Görschen and Rahna were also carried amidst deafening cheers ; both villages were speedily wrapped in flames ; black volumes of smoke enveloped the whole right, and aide-de-camp after aide-de-camp was despatched to Napoleon, pressing for reinforcements, or all was lost in that quarter.¹

¹ Lond. 22,
23. Précis,
Schoell,
Recueil, ii.
306, 307.
Odel. i. 50.
Fain, i. 350,
351.

37.
Napoleon's
measures to
repair the
disorder.

The Emperor's resolution was instantly taken. "We have no cavalry," said he. "No matter : it will be a battle as in Egypt. The French infantry is equal to any thing ; and I commit myself, without alarm, to the inherent valour of our young conscripts." Orders were immediately despatched to Macdonald, who was on the left near Lindenau, to retrace his steps, and direct his march to the point of attack on the right. The Viceroy, gifted with the true eye of a general, had already stopped his advance on hearing the cannon to the right, and enjoined him to incline in that direction ; orders were simultaneously sent to Marmont to hasten across the fields in the same direction, so as to come up, upon Ney's right ; Bertrand was instructed to advance, as quickly as possible, on the same side ; while the whole troops on the road

between Lützen and Leipsic were at once halted, and wheeled into line by a movement to the right. Napoleon himself set off with his suite in the same direction, directing his rapid course to the point where the smoke was thickest and the cannon loudest. But before these various succours could arrive, disasters, wellnigh attended with fatal consequences, had ensued in that direction.¹

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Vict et
Conq. xxii.
36, 37. Fain,
i. 351, 352.
Lond. 23.

Wittgenstein, overjoyed at the success of his first attack, which had answered his most sanguine expectations, resolved to support it to the utmost of his power, and direct his principal forces to that quarter, while at the same time he distracted the enemy's attention by a furious onset upon his centre. He brought up, therefore, his second line, and a part of his reserves, which had now become necessary ; for Ney, having moved forward the divisions Brennier, Gérard, and Marchand, to the support of Souham, which advanced in squares, as at the battle of the Pyramids, had, by a brilliant charge with the bayonet, regained the lost villages, and driven back the Allies almost to the ground they occupied at the commencement of the action. A few words addressed by the Prussian generals to their men when the second line came up, restored their confidence, and they returned to the attack of the burning villages with redoubled ardour. Nothing could withstand their impetuosity. The French columns, driven out of the houses, were charged in the intervening open ground by the Allied horse, and thrown into confusion. Several regiments of conscripts disbanded and fled ; the plain was covered with fugitives, and dismay overspread the whole French right. Seeing his attack thus far successful, Wittgenstein brought up his reserves of the Russians and Prussians to decide the victory. These noble troops advanced in the finest order, through a driving tempest of cannon-shot from the French batteries, and, pressing incessantly forward, carried the villages of Klein Görschen and Hohenlöhe by assault, and drove the enemy beyond Kaia, the key of the French right, which

38.
Counter-
movements
of Wittgen-
stein.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

became the prey of the flames, and remained burning furiously, unoccupied by either party. The whole French line, in the centre and on the right, retired five or six hundred paces, abandoning also the village of Starsiedel, which the Allies, however, were not in sufficient strength to occupy. It was now six o'clock; the battle seemed gained. The French right, driven back a mile and a half, had not only been expelled from the five villages which formed its strongholds, but in great part thrown into disorder. Half an hour's farther advance would bring the Allies upon the line of Bertrand's advance, and cut him off from the remainder of the army; while their numerous and magnificent cavalry were already forming in dense and menacing masses to sweep along the open plains, in the rear of the enemy's centre and left, and complete his destruction in a quarter, and by a force, to which he had nothing to oppose.¹

¹ Fain, i.
355, 356.
Précis,
Schoell,
Recueil, ii.
307, 309.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
38, 39.
Lond. 23.

39.
Napoleon
hastens to
the right to
restore the
battle.

No sooner were these disastrous tidings brought to Napoleon, than he set out at the gallop to restore affairs by his own presence at the scene of this terrible conflict. On approaching the right wing, clear evidence appeared at every step of the imminence of the danger. The plain was covered by conscripts flying from the dreadful fire of the Russian artillery; the columns which still held together were retreating, closely followed by the Allied infantry; and the threatening clouds of their horse were preparing to deluge the field the moment that the last villages were passed. Yet, even in these circumstances of alarm, the Emperor received the most touching proofs of the devotion of his troops. The broken crowds of conscripts reformed in haste at sight of the imperial staff, and endeavoured, by throwing themselves into little knots or squares, to arrest the disorder; numbers rejoined the ranks which still held together; the wounded, which were carried past in numbers every minute increasing, never failed to salute the Emperor with the wonted acclamations. Cries of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" broke from lips soon about to be

silent for ever ; and a faint expression of joy illuminated the countenances of the dying youths when the well-known form of Napoleon flitted before their eyes. Never had the French army displayed more devoted valour—never did the generals and officers evince a more heroic spirit—and never, except perhaps at Wagram, had the Emperor exposed his person more than at that awful crisis. But he was deeply impressed with the danger of his situation. Orders were already given for a retreat ; and when an aide-de-camp brought the intelligence, as he came up, that Ney's second attack on Kaia had failed, he received the news with a terrific exclamation—"Ha !" accompanied by a look to Berthier and Caulaincourt, which froze every heart around him with horror.^{1*}

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Odel. i. 51,
52. Jom. iv.
281, 282.
Lond. 23.
Schoell,
Recueil, ii.
309.

Both parties, perceiving that the decisive point of the battle was to be found in the ruins of Kaia, strove, by accumulating forces upon it, to secure to themselves so important an acquisition ; like two skilful players at chess, who successively bring up all their forces to support the attack or defence, towards the close of the struggle, of an inconsiderable piece on the board. Napoleon, placing himself at a short distance behind the village, arranged the broken remains of Ney's divisions, which had been already engaged, preceded by the division Ricard, with his aide-de-camp Count Lobau at their head, for a fresh attack. These gallant troops advanced with cool intrepidity ; and being now decidedly superior in number to their opponents, they drove them back behind Kaia, and into the neighbourhood of Klein Görschen. Blucher's Prussians of the reserve, however, issued with the utmost vigour from that village ; a furious combat ensued in the

40.
Prodigious
efforts of
both parties
at the de-
cisive point.

* "The moment was very critical : the Emperor called me to his side, and asked, where were the treasure and equipages. 'I have executed,' replied I, 'the orders of your majesty : they are at Lützen.' 'Lose not a moment then,' said he, 'to move them back to Merseburg : it is our rallying point in the event of retreat.' The whole baggage immediately took the road for Merseburg, where I arrived at night, and found it occupied by a division of Eugene's corps, which had been detached in the utmost haste to occupy, during the alarm, that important point."—*Souvenirs de DUMAS*, iii. 499.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

1 Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
38, 39, Jom.
iv. 282, 283.
Précis in
Schoell, ii.
Recueil, ii.
309, 310.

41.
Conflict of
the Berlin
volunteers
and French
conscripts.

plain between the two ; Gérard and Brennier both fell severely wounded at the head of their troops, the former exclaiming, "Soldiers, the moment is arrived when every Frenchman who has the feelings of honour in his bosom should conquer or die." Nor would the Prussians recede an inch ; the Berlin volunteers melted away under the fire, but stood immovable ; both parties kept their ground with undaunted resolution, and as the shades of evening began to creep over the field, the flashes of the musketry on either side appeared fixed to one spot, and almost close to each other.^{1*}

This obstinate conflict, however, gained for Napoleon, what he alone required to wrest their hard-earned successes from the Allies—time. While the combat was raging between Kaia and Klein Görschen, the other corps of the French army came up. The Imperial Guard was now assembled close behind Kaia in reserve, with Napoleon at its head ; Marmont's men were debouching from Starsiedel, and with Bertrand's forces were on the one side, Macdonald's infantry were approaching the willow thickets, which adjoined the Flossgraben, on the other. Seventy thousand French infantry pressed upon the Allies, who at that point had not more than forty thousand to oppose to them. As a last effort, Wittgenstein ordered the artillery of General Winzingerode to march forward, and take the enemy, combating between the villages, on their left flank, while his infantry advanced to the support of the now almost exhausted Prussians. This able manœuvre had at first a surprising success. One of his divisions debouched from Eissdorf,

* " Come pare d' ardir con forza pare
Quinci Austro in guerra vien, quindi Aquilone ;
Non ei fra lor, non cede il cielo o 'l mare,
Ma nube a nube e flutto a flutto oppone :
Così nè ceder qua, nè là piegare
Si vede l' ostinata aspra tenzone.
S'affronta insieme orribilmente urtando
Scudo a scudo, elmo ad elmo, e brando a brando."

Ger. Lib. ix. 52.

on the Flossgraben streamlet, and drove back Marchand's division of Ney's troops; while another reinforced the Prussians among the villages, and with the aid of the guns on the enemy's flank, a third time with loud shouts drove him out of Klein Görschen and Kaia, back upon the Imperial Guard of Napoleon. An interesting yet melancholy incident took place in the contest for the burning villages. The volunteers of Berlin and the young conscripts of Paris met amidst the ruins; both made their first essay in arms, but both fought with the courage of veteran soldiers. Hand to hand, body to body, heart to heart, these gallant youths struggled with invincible obstinacy amidst the flames, and nearly a half of their numbers found there an untimely grave.^{1*}

Napoleon now saw that the decisive moment had arrived; all his troops within reach, except the Imperial Guard, had been engaged. He forthwith ordered up that formidable host, which had so often decided the fate of European fields. Sixteen battalions of the Young Guard were drawn up in a close column, preceded by sixty pieces of its incomparable artillery, commanded by Drouot, and followed by the whole reserve cavalry. This weighty column soon made its way through the disordered masses which lay in its line of advance. Nothing could withstand the swift and deadly fire of Drouot's guns, which seemed absolutely to be discharged as they moved along. Kaia was regained, and the Allies forced back, still facing about, and firing without intermission, to Klein Görschen. The Prussian battalions were now so much reduced by eight hours' incessant

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Fain, i.
359, 360.
Guil. de
Vaud.
Camp. de
1813, 81.
Jom. iv.
282, 283.
Précis in
Schoell,
Recueil, ii.
311, 312.

42.
Final charge
of the
French
guards.

* "I had nothing," said Ney to General Mathieu Dumas after the battle, "but battalions of conscripts; but I had good reason to congratulate myself on their conduct. I doubt if I could have achieved as much with the grenadiers of the Guard. I had before me the best troops of the enemy, including the whole Prussian Guard; our bravest warriors, after having twice failed, would probably have never carried the villages; but *five times* I led back those brave youths, whose docility, and perhaps inexperience, have served me better than the most veteran valour. The French infantry can never be too young."—*Souvenirs de DUMAS*, iii. 499.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

fighting, that they formed little more than a line of tirailleurs, which was obliged to fall back behind that village to re-form. There, however, the fight was renewed. Mortier had a horse shot under him—Dumoustier fell by his side ; while, on the Prussian side, Scharnhorst was mortally wounded, the Prince Leopold of Hesse-Homburg and Prince Mecklenburg-Strelitz were killed. But the Guard, enveloped by clouds of dust and smoke, still steadily pressed on, and the advancing sound of their artillery and light of their guns showed that the enemy's was in retreat on the right. At the same time the Viceroy, who at this critical moment came up from Lindenau, fell on the extreme right of the Prince of Würtemberg, and drew off his batteries from the flank of the columns engaged among the villages ; and it was only by great exertions, and the admirable steadiness of the Prussian troops, that that prince was able to maintain himself in his position, without prosecuting the attack which in the first instance had been attended with such important effects.¹

¹ Schoell, Recueil, ii. 312. Lond. 24. Jom. iv. 283, 284.

43.
Retreat of the Allies, and close of the action.

² Prussian Official Account, Schoell, i. 44, 48. Fain, i. 361, 362. Précis in Schoell, Recueil, ii. 312, 313. Jom. iv. 283, 284. Vict. et Conq. xxii. 39, 40. Lond. 24.

The fire of the artillery continued with the utmost violence along the whole line till darkness enveloped the field, and several charges of the Allied horse upon the French squares were followed by brilliant success ; but although they retained the greater part of the ground they had won on the right and in the centre, it was evident they were overmatched at the decisive point. The Russian and Prussian Guards, who were impatiently expected, had not yet come up ; a reinforcement of two divisions of Russian grenadiers, under Konownitzen, which Wittgenstein hurled at the very close of the day against the left of Ney's corps, was assailed in flank by the Viceroy at the head of Macdonald's three fresh divisions, and so rudely handled that they were obliged to retreat, and evacuate the village of Eissdorf.² At the same time, on the extreme left of the Allies' line, Bertrand's corps was debouching by Gossrau and Pobles,

and threatened early next morning to assail the disputed villages in flank. In these circumstances, the Allied sovereigns gave orders for a retreat on the following morning. They themselves retired for the night to Löbstadt; the right was concentrated in and around Gross Görschen, where the soldiers composing it sank to sleep amidst the smoking ruins; and Napoleon despatched couriers to Paris, Cracow, Rome, Vienna, and Constantinople, to announce that he had gained the victory.

Strict orders had been given by the Emperor that no pursuit should be attempted: he was well aware of his inferiority in cavalry, and having observed that a considerable part of the Allied horse had not been engaged, he feared some surprise during the night. To guard against such a danger, fires were directed to be kindled along the whole front of the French position, and the men were ordered to lie down in squares. It soon appeared how necessary these precautions had been. As Napoleon was riding at nine at night across part of the field of battle towards Lützen, where headquarters were to be established, he was suddenly startled by a fire of musketry from behind a hedge, followed by the irruption of a huge mass of horse, which advanced in close order and at a steady pace through the squares, almost to the imperial escort. Had they pushed on two hundred paces farther, they would have taken the Emperor with all his suite. As it was, the alarm was so great that all his followers dispersed; Napoleon himself disappeared for some minutes, and the anxious question was asked by them all, when they re-assembled, "Where is the Emperor?" Some squares now came up, and poured in a close fire on both sides, the Allied horse got entangled during the darkness in a ravine, and at length the body which had made this irruption, consisting of eight squadrons, retired to their own position; and the combat at all points ceased on this field of blood.¹

CHAP.
LXXXV.

1813.

44.
Night at-
tack of the
Allied horse
on the
French
line.

¹ Odel, i. 57,
58, Fain, i.
366, 367.
Lond. 24.
Précis in
Recueil by
Schoell, ii.
313, 314.

At daybreak on the following morning, Napoleon left

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

45.

Aspect of
the field of
battle.

Lützen, and, according to his usual custom, rode over the field of battle. It afforded ample subject for meditation, and evinced clearly the obstinate and nearly balanced nature of the conflict in which the French empire was now engaged. Between the villages of Kaia and Gross Görschen, the whole surface of the ground was covered with the slain, of whom above two-thirds were French. The dead on their side were about six, the wounded twelve thousand.* The youthful visages and slender figures of a great proportion of the corpses on both sides, presented a melancholy and interesting spectacle; and showed at once how war had strained the military strength of both monarchies, and what ardent passions had mutually inspired their people. Many of the dead bodies were those of the Prussian landwehr and land-sturm. The French gazed with astonishment on the long hair, rough mien, and coarse garments of these rural combatants, many of whom were not yet in uniform, but lay on the field in their dresses from the plough. But Napoleon viewed them with yet deeper feelings, and mused long on these decisive proofs of the universal spirit which had drawn forth in Prussia "the might that slumbers in a peasant's arm." The troops saluted him with their accustomed acclamations, and seemed to have lost none of their wonted enthusiasm. Nothing appeared so extraordinary to his attendants as the immense army which had in a manner sprung up out of the earth at his summons, and the admirable spirit with which it was animated.¹

The battle of Lützen must always be considered as one of the most striking proofs of Napoleon's military abilities. The success gained was far from being decisive, the Allies having retreated next day in admir-

¹ Ode l. i. 59,
62. Fain, i.
367, 369.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
42, 43.

* Ney's corps alone lost twelve thousand men and five hundred officers, killed and wounded. The number of wounded was so great, that the generals accused the young conscripts of having injured themselves to escape the fatigues and dangers of the campaign.—JOMINI, iv. 285.

able order, without the sacrifice either of prisoners, standards, or cannon, and with a loss of only fifteen thousand men, while the French were weakened by eighteen thousand, of whom nine hundred were prisoners. Yet a most important advantage had been gained by the first success in the campaign, and the restoration of the credit of the French arms in the eyes of Europe. They had forced the veteran bands of Russia to retreat, with an army for the most part composed of young conscripts.* Although, also, the superiority of numbers upon the whole was decidedly on the side of the French, yet this was far from being the case with the forces actually engaged until a late period of the day. The Allies selected their own point of attack; their movements had been so admirably screened from the enemy by the numerous light horse which covered their advance, that, though they bivouacked within two leagues of the French right on the night preceding, their vicinity was not even suspected. When the attack on Gross Görschen commenced on the 2d, Ney's corps alone was at hand to resist it, while the remainder of the army was spread over a line thirty miles in length, from the gates of Leipsic to the banks of the Saale. Surprised in this manner in a scattered line of march by the unforeseen onset of the enemy in concentrated masses on his right and centre, Napoleon ran the most imminent hazard of seeing his army pierced through the middle, and severed in twain, by an enemy whose superiority in

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

46.

Loss on
both sides,
and reflec-
tions on the
battle.

* Knowing of what vital importance success at Lützen was to arrest the torrent of misfortune which threatened to submerge his empire, Napoleon made the most extraordinary efforts to animate the spirit of his troops. Shortly before, he had, for some fault, degraded from his rank the colonel of a battalion, who, being a very brave man, was much beloved by his soldiers: when the regiment was to charge under Count Lobau to regain Kaia, he rode up to the front of the battalion, and replaced him in his station, after addressing to him a few words. The shouts of joy from the battalion resounded over the field: the cry spread from rank to rank, and was heard even above the roar of the artillery; and the battalion, heading a column, soon was to be seen mounting in the most gallant style a height behind Starsiedel.—See ODELEBEN, i. 55.

CHAP.
LXXXV.

1813.

cavalry would have enabled him speedily to convert such a disaster into total ruin. The manœuvre which he had practised with such decisive effect on the Allies at Austerlitz was on the point of being turned against himself. Had Wittgenstein kept his reserves better in hand, and followed up the capture of Klein Görschen and Kaia at the moment with adequate forces, there can be little doubt that this result would have taken place. It was the highest effort of the military art, therefore, in Napoleon to restore the battle after such an advantage had been gained, and such a surprise incurred; to arrest the enemy's advance by obstinate resistance in the only situation where, from the proximity of the villages, it could be attempted, and prolong the combat till the concentration of his forces from both sides enabled him to assume the offensive with superior strength.

47.
Retreat of
the Allies to
Dresden.

April 7.

During the action Bulow had carried the town of Halle by assault, and taken six guns; but the turn which affairs took on the plain of Lützen rendered this advantage, which otherwise might have been important, of no avail. The Allied army retired slowly, and in admirable order, towards Dresden, which the main body reached on the 7th, and, passing on without halting, took the road to Silesia, where a strong intrenched position had for some time been preparing at BAUTZEN. Notwithstanding the methodical arrangements, however, and short marches of the retreat, considerable confusion soon ensued. Ten thousand chariots, a vast number of them loaded with wounded, retiring on a single line, necessarily occasioned great embarrassment. In many places the road was blocked up, and nothing but the unconquerable firmness of the rearguard imposed on the French, and prevented the most serious disasters. The retreat was conducted in two columns: the Russians retired by Chemnitz and Freyberg, followed by Bertrand and Oudinot; the Prussians by Frohburg and Nossen to Dresden, pursued by Lauriston, Marmont, Eugene,

and the Imperial Guard; while Ney moved upon Torgau and Wittenberg, where he was to be joined by Victor, who was to move thither from Magdeburg. Ney's corps, however, which had suffered so severely in the battle, was at first left to rest some days on the field, in order to bury the dead and re-form its ranks. The Emperor intended, that while the bulk of his army followed the Allied sovereigns into Silesia, that gallant marshal should receive a recompense for his valour, by being sent against Berlin; and thither accordingly he was soon directed. Severe combats with the Allies took place at Etsdorf, Nossen, and Wildsruf; but the French obtained no advantage, and Milaradowich, who commanded the rearguard, after cutting the arches of the bridge of Dresden, which had been restored in a temporary manner, took post in force among the houses on the right bank.¹

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

May 5.
— 6.
— 7.
1 Lond. 25,
26. Fain, i.
370, 373.
Jom. iv.
287. Odel.
i. 63, 66.

When the French army approached Dresden, even the meanest soldiers were struck by the beauty of the spectacle which presented itself. Its lovely encircling hills, crowned with villas, gardens, and orchards, divided by the noble stream of the Elbe, which at all seasons awaken the admiration of the traveller, were then in their highest beauty, decked in the first green and flowers of spring. The ascending sun glittered with dazzling brightness on the steeples, domes, and palaces of the city; calmness and peace seemed to have marked it for their own; no sound of alarm or sign of devastation was yet perceptible in its smiling environs. But war in its most terrible form was about to prey upon this devoted capital; for six long months it was to be the scene of combats, of suffering, and of blood; and already, amidst all the luxuriance of opening nature, the symptoms, as yet brilliant and majestic, of military preparations were to be seen. In those orchards, the glitter of bayonets could be discerned; on every height of those hills, artillery was planted: two black columns of smoke announced the

48.
Beautiful
appearance
of Dresden
on the ap-
proach of
the French.
May 8.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹Odel. i. 66,
67. Témoin
Ocul. i. 120,
128. Odel.
ii. 120.
Fain, i.
373, 375.

burning of the temporary bridges, above and below the city, which the Russians had erected ; while occasional cannon-shot from the right bank, still in the hands of the Allies, mingled with the clang of the bells which announced the approach of Napoleon on the left. The few remaining Cossacks swam their horses across the Elbe after the bridges were destroyed ; and Dresden, wholly evacuated by the Allies, but in the deepest terror and anxiety, awaited the arrival of the conqueror.¹

To deprecate his wrath, which the decided favour the inhabitants had shown to the Allied cause gave them every reason to apprehend, the magistrates waited upon Napoleon a mile and a half from the city, on the road to Freyberg. "Who are you?" said he in a quick and rude tone. "Members of the municipality," replied the trembling burgomasters. "Have you bread?" "Our resources have been entirely exhausted by the requisitions of the Russians and Prussians." "Ha! it is *impossible*, is it? I know no such word: get ready bread, meat, and wine. I know all you have done: you richly deserve to be treated as a conquered people; but I forgive all from regard to your King: he is the saviour of your country. You have been already punished by having had the Russians and Prussians amongst you, and being governed by Baron Stein." With these words he turned aside from the city, and, directing his horse toward Pirna, traversed the ramparts of the town, as far as the road which leads to Pilnitz. He there dismounted, and walked on foot, accompanied only by Caulaincourt and a page, to the banks of the river, at the point where the Russians had constructed their bridge of boats. The Viceroy soon after joined them, and the Emperor and he advanced alone to the water's edge, while the Russian guns were still occasionally firing from the opposite side. Having completed his observations, without injury, in that quarter, and made himself master by inquiry of the whole particulars attending that vic-

49.
Entry of
Napoleon
into Dres-
den.
May 8.

CHAP.
LXXXV.

1813.

nity, he proceeded to the other side of the town, beyond Friedrichstadt, where the bridge of rafts near Uebigau was still for the most part standing, not more than one-third having been consumed by the fire which the Russians had applied to it. Some light horsemen threw themselves into boats, approached the burning pile, extinguished the flames, and drew nearly two-thirds of the bridge in safety to the left bank. Having secured this important acquisition, his next care was to reconnoitre the banks still farther down; and having discovered a place near Priesnitz, where the heights on the left bank overtopped those on the right, and a curve in the stream broke the force of the current, he gave orders for the construction of a bridge of rafts there with all possible expedition.¹

¹ Odel. i. 68,
70. Fain, i.
379, 380.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
43, 44.

Disquieting intelligence having been received in the evening from Torgau, where the governor not only still persisted in refusing to admit a French garrison, but alleged in his vindication the express orders of his sovereign, a special messenger was despatched to the King of Saxony to know whether he still adhered to the Confederation of the Rhine, accompanied by an intimation, that, "if he did not forthwith return to his capital, he should lose his kingdom." On the following morning, Napoleon was on horseback by daybreak, urging on in person the preparations for the passage of the river under the heights of Priesnitz. The engineers had made extraordinary efforts during the night; the bridge of rafts was speedily repaired; the marines from Brest had powerfully seconded the land engineers; and two battalions of light troops had already been crossed over to the right bank, where they were spread out as videttes, both to keep off the enemy and acquire information. These preparations, however, had not escaped the notice of the Allies, who sent in the night a considerable body of troops, accompanied by fifty pieces of cannon, to the bank opposite Uebigau. Already the dropping fire of the tirailleurs was

50.
Napoleon's
preparations
for the pas-
sage of the
Elbe.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

to be heard on both sides of the river, and the deep booming of the Russian cannon at intervals showed that a serious resistance was intended. No sooner did Napoleon see the preparations of the enemy, than he called out in a voice of thunder to General Drouot, "A hundred pieces of cannon!" and posted himself on an eminence, at a short distance in the rear, to direct their disposition. The artillery of the Guard quickly came up at the gallop, and Drouot disposed them on the heights of Priesnitz, and at the extremity of the valley of the Ostra, where they commanded the enemy's guns on the opposite bank. But such was the impatience of the Emperor for the completion of the operation, which did not immediately succeed, that when Drouot returned to him to give an account of his proceedings, he vented his displeasure upon him in a manner at once unseemly and ludicrous.¹*

¹ Odel. i. 70,
71. Fain, i.
380, 381.
Jom. iv. 287.
Lucches. iii.
421.

51.
A passage is
effected at
Dresden.

Drouot was right, however; the guns were well placed; and this speedily appeared in the tremendous fire which they opened upon the Russian batteries. For some time the cannonade was kept up with great vigour on both sides, and several of the enemy's balls fell close to the Emperor, whose head was struck by a splinter which one drove from a piece of wood close to him. "If it had struck me on the breast," said he calmly, "all was over." It soon, however, appeared that the French artillery was superior, both in number and position, to that to which they were opposed; and as the object of the Russians was not to defend the passage of the river, which they well

* He was in such a rage, that he took him by the ears and pulled them; but the general preserved his presence of mind, and replied calmly, but firmly, that the guns could not be better placed. Napoleon, upon this, recovered his good-humour, and the thing passed off with a laugh. Such sallies of temper were very frequent with the Emperor, especially in his latter years; but they were not of long endurance, and when the first burst of fury was over, he usually recovered himself. Drouot, the well-known commander of the artillery of the Guard, was a very remarkable man. He always had a small Bible with him to read, which constituted his chief delight, and he avowed it openly to the persons in the imperial suite: a peculiarity not a little remarkable in that staff, and the admission of which required no small degree of moral courage. He

knew against such a general and army was impossible, but only to delay his crossing, they drew off their guns in the afternoon, and the passage was left unopposed. New obstacles of a still more serious nature now presented themselves. Heavy rains, and the melting of the Bohemian snows, had raised a flood in the Elbe; anchors, cables, and grappling irons were wanting, and, after two days of unprofitable labour, the undertaking was abandoned. It was deemed easier to restore, in a temporary manner, the two arches which had been cut in the bridge of Dresden. By the indefatigable exertions of the French engineers, the preparations were pushed forward with such activity, that, by ten o'clock on the morning of the 11th, all was ready even for the passage of the artillery; and the whole corps of the Viceroy, Marmont, and Bertrand, were crossed over. They found the opposite suburb entirely evacuated by the enemy, who were in full retreat to the great intrenched position, where they intended to give battle, at Bautzen. Such was the impatience of the Emperor for the completion of the passage, that he promised a napoleon to every boat which was ferried across. During the whole of the 11th he remained seated on a stone bench on the bridge, listening to the shouts of the young conscripts as they passed over, and feasting his eyes with the long trains of artillery, which seemed to be destined to hurl to the right bank of the Elbe all the horrors of war which had hitherto devastated the left.¹

CHAP.
LXXV.
1813.

May 11.

¹Odel. i. 72,
74. Fain, i.
382, 384.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
44.

On the following day, the King of Saxony gave a clear proof of the terror which Napoleon's success had inspired,

was not without a certain shade of superstition; for, as Napoleon usually brought him forward at the most hazardous moment, and he was always at the head of his troops, his situation was full of peril; and he was careful on such occasions to array himself in his old uniform of general of artillery, as he had long worn it and never received an injury. When near the enemy he constantly dismounted from horseback, and advanced on foot in the middle of his guns, and, by a most extraordinary chance, neither himself nor his horse was ever wounded. His modesty was equal to his knowledge, his fidelity to his courage; and he gave a shining proof of the latter quality by accompanying Napoleon to Elba, amidst the general defection by which the more exalted objects of the Emperor's bounty were disgraced.—See ODELEBEN, i. 131, 132.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

52.

Return of
the King of
Saxony to
Dresden,
and his final
adherence
to the cause
of Napoleon.

by arriving in person at Dresden, to place himself and all his resources at the disposal of the French Emperor. This proceeding was in the highest degree gratifying to Napoleon, who thus not only saw secured the adherence of an important ally and valuable army, in possession of fortresses of vital consequence in the campaign, but beheld himself restored to the rank which he most coveted—that of the arbiter of the destinies, and protector of the thrones of sovereigns. So anxious was he for his arrival, that for two days before he came the troops had been posted to a considerable distance on the road to Prague, expecting his approach. The motives which led to this resolution on the part of Frederick Augustus were very apparent. Austria, though evidently inclining to the side of the Allies, was not yet prepared to take the field, and a considerable time must elapse before her forces could join those of the Allies; and meanwhile Napoleon was in possession of his capital and dominions, and if they were treated as conquered countries, the most frightful miseries awaited his subjects. Influenced by these considerations, and by that regard to rectitude and the obligation of treaties which is so rare in crowned heads, the King of Saxony, who had for some time been forced to temporise,* in expectation of seeing what line Austria was likely to take, and had actually ordered General Thielman, when the first inaccurate accounts of the battle of Lützen were brought, to shut his gates against the French troops, now adopted a decided course, and threw his crown and fortune into hazard with Napoleon.¹

His arrival was preceded by a peremptory order to General Thielman forthwith to surrender the fortress of

¹ Odel. i. 76.
Fain, i. 388.
Jom. iv.
288.

* "I have seen with entire satisfaction the conduct you have pursued at Torgau, regarding the conferences proposed to you by the Allied generals as well as before you left Dresden, and it has entirely justified my confidence in you. To allow some pieces of artillery to go out of your walls for the siege of Wittenberg, (then in the hands of the French,) would be altogether contrary to my relations with Austria, which are positively determined."—KING OF SAXONY to GENERAL THIELMAN, 30th April 1813; FAIR, i. 485.

Torgau to Marshal Ney, who took possession of it on the 13th, and commenced the passage of the river; while the Saxon troops, fourteen thousand strong, including some regiments of excellent cavalry, were anew placed under the orders of Reynier, and formed the seventh corps of the army. General Thielman, whose communications by his sovereign's orders with the Allies had for some time been well known, and who was indignant at the adherence of his sovereign to the oppressor of Germany, and the contradictory orders which within the last few days he had received,* quitted his colours, and entered into the service of the Emperor of Russia. Meanwhile the King of Saxony was welcomed with extraordinary pomp by Napoleon at Dresden. The Imperial Guards lined the road in the vicinity of the city; the cavalry, which met him near the camp of Pirna, formed his escort to the gates of the town; while the Emperor, who received him on one of the little bridges of the road leading to Pirna, and attended him to his palace amidst discharges of artillery, ringing of bells, and the acclamations of the soldiers, enjoyed the satisfaction of giving the most decisive proof to Europe of the reality of his success at Lützen, by thus restoring to his capital and throne the first of his allies who had suffered by the events of the war.¹

But if the arrival of the King of Saxony at Dresden was thus a source of the highest gratification to Napoleon, the advices and intelligence which he brought from Prague, in regard to the intentions of Austria, were of the most disquieting kind. It was no longer doubtful that the court of Vienna was only temporising, to gain

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

53.

The Saxons
are placed
under Rey-
nier, and
Thielman
joins the
Allies.

¹ Odel. i. 76,
78. Fain, i.
388, 390.
Jom. iv.
288, 289.
Hard. xii.
149, 150.

54.

Alarming
state of the
negotiations
with Aus-
tria.

* " My order, as expressed to you in my letter of the 19th April, is, that the independence of Torgau should be maintained with the utmost care, and that its gates should be opened to no one without my express order, in concert with the Emperor of Austria. I now add, to prevent misunderstanding, that, if the fortune of arms should bring back the French forces to the Elbe, you are to conduct yourself in the same manner; and, as a necessary consequence, that Torgau should not be opened to the French troops."—KING OF SAXONY to GENERAL THIELMAN, 5th May 1813; FAIN, i. 486.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

May 12.

¹ Napoleon
to Nar-
bonne, May
12, 1813.
Fain, i.
393, 394.
Hard. xii.
155, 156.

time to complete its preparations, and there was too much reason to apprehend that its armaments would ultimately be turned to the advantage of the Allies. Prince Schwartzenberg at Paris had already let fall some hints, that an alliance which policy had formed, policy might dissolve ;* the light troops of the army had intercepted some correspondence of the cabinet of Vienna with the members of the Rhenish confederacy, which breathed a hostile spirit towards France ; and the King of Saxony, fresh from Prague, not only confirmed these alarming advices, but communicated the intelligence that the Emperor of Austria had either contracted, or was on the eve of contracting, positive engagements with the Allied powers.† Napoleon, therefore, saw that there was no time to lose in striking terror into the cabinet of Vienna. On the very day, accordingly, of the King of Saxony's arrival, he wrote to his minister at that capital, aspersing the character of Metternich, who, he said, mistook intrigue for politics. In this letter he boasted of his own forces, which he stated at eleven hundred thousand men, of which three hundred thousand were already on the Elbe : desired Narbonne to allude to the intercepted letters, which gave the Emperor an ample title to desire him to demand his passports ; but declared his willingness to forget all, and renew pacific relations on reasonable terms. The letters contained an injunction not to commit himself in regard to Silesia, and *not to mention the Bourbons*, as they were entirely forgotten in Europe¹—a phrase which sufficiently proved

* "Ah ! the marriage," said Schwartzenberg to Maret at Paris — "the marriage ! Policy has made it ; but ———."—See FAIN, i. 390, note.

† "Austria is gradually unmasking herself in all her relations with our allies. She assumes the attitude, towards Denmark, Saxony, Bavaria, and Würtemberg, Naples, and Westphalia, of the friend of peace and of France, who desires nothing for her own aggrandisement. But at the same time, she recommends to them to set on foot no useless armaments — not to exhaust themselves by giving succours to France, which would serve no other purpose but to render the Emperor more untractable, and which besides would be without an object, as Austria has one hundred and fifty thousand men ready to cast in the balance

that they were anything rather than forgotten by himself.*

Two days afterwards Count Bubna arrived at Dresden from the cabinet of Vienna, and at the same time M. de Stadion was despatched from the same court to the headquarters of the Allied sovereigns at Bautzen, earnestly pressing upon both an accommodation. In this attempt Metternich, at the moment it was made, was perfectly sincere; for he was seriously alarmed by the result of the battle of Lützen, and dreaded nothing so much as that Russia and France would accommodate their differences by a treaty on the drum-head, and that Napoleon would be left at liberty to take vengeance at his leisure on the German powers which had incurred his displeasure. M. Bubna had several long interviews with Napoleon, in the course of which he made the Emperor acquainted with the expectations of his court in regard to the concessions by France, and accession of territory to themselves, which were hoped for. These were, that Austria should have the Illyrian provinces, an increase of territory on the side of Poland, and some also on the Bavarian frontier; and that the Confederation of the Rhine should be dissolved. Without committing himself either one way or another in regard to these demands, Napoleon merely declared that he would agree to an armistice, on condition that the Allies retired behind the Oder, and he himself behind the Elbe, with a view to a congress at Prague, at which England and America should be invited to attend.¹ And M. Bubna having set out for Vienna

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

55.

Mission of
Count
Bubna to
Dresden,
and of
Stadion to
Bautzen.

¹ Count
Bubna to
Stadion,
May 18,
1813. Fain,
i. 395, 396.
Hard. xii.
155, 158.
Jom. iv.
289, 292.
Bign. xii.
95.

against whichever of the two parties should wish to continue the war." — STAKELBERG, *Envoyé Russe à Vienne à Salons*, 28th May 1813; *Rapport de M. LE DUC DE BASSANO*, 20th August 1813; *Moniteur*.

"Before the battle of Lützen, the Emperor of Austria had already contracted secret engagements with the Allies, and was on the eve of declaring himself. For this reason Napoleon sent Eugene into Italy to reorganise an army. Before the campaign commenced, Austria had opened negotiations with all the powers of the Rhenish confederacy." — GUICCIARD, pp. 129, 131.

* "As to the Bourbons, be sure never to speak of them; no one in France or in Europe thinks of them; they are forgotten even in England." — NAPOLÉON to NARBONNE, 12th May 1813; HARDENBERG, xii. 154.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

56.
Napoleon's
secret pro-
posals to
Russia at
this period.

May 18.

with this ultimatum, the Emperor took his departure for his advanced guard in Silesia.

Before finally committing his fate to the chances of war, Napoleon made the very attempt which Metternich so much dreaded—that of opening a separate negotiation with one of the Allied powers, in the hope of detaching it from the rest. On the day on which Bubna set out for Vienna, he secretly despatched Caulaincourt to the headquarters of the Emperor of Russia. The object of this mission was to induce the cabinet of St Petersburg to accommodate its differences with France, at the expense of Austria. Well knowing that the great object of its jealousy was the existence, and probable increase, of the grand-duchy of Warsaw, he proposed to extend the Confederation of the Rhine to the Oder: to increase Westphalia by one million five hundred thousand souls; and to give to Prussia, in exchange for the territory thus lost, the whole grand-duchy of Warsaw and the territory of Dantzic, with the exception of the duchy of Oldenburg, by which means she would acquire an increase of between four and five millions of souls, and be restored to the rank she held before the battle of Jena. Her capital was to be Warsaw; and the great advantage held out was, that three hundred leagues and an independent power, in possession of all the fortresses on the Vistula, would thus be interposed between France and Russia.* Alexander, however, was proof against these seductions. He received Caulaincourt, but in presence of the ministers of England, Austria, and Sweden,¹ as well as of the King

¹ Plotho, i.
204. Lucch.
iii. 425.
Jom. iv.
297, 298.

* The preamble to Caulaincourt's instructions bore:—"The Emperor's intention is to negotiate with Russia a peace which may be glorious to her, and which may make Austria pay for her bad faith, and the false policy which she pursued in exasperating France and Russia against each other. The Emperor Alexander will easily rebut these arguments, by insisting on the radical evil of the existence of the grand-duchy of Warsaw; and that will naturally lead, after abundance of mystery and diplomatic reserve on both sides, to the propositions which we make, which, on condition of secrecy, you are to propose as follows." Then follow the conditions stated in the text.—*NAPOLEON'S Instructions to CAULAINCOURT, 18th May 1813; JOMINI, iv. 296.*

of Prussia, and expressed, in their joint name, his anxious wish for the termination of hostilities ; but, at the same time, his determination to remain firm to his engagements with the Allies, and the cause of European independence.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

Nothing, however, can paint Napoleon better, or evince more clearly his invariable readiness to sacrifice honour, probity, and resentment to present expedience, than the tenor of these proposals. At the very time that he was making so striking a parade in the eyes of Europe of his firm regard for, and inviolable fidelity to, the King of Saxony, who had risked his crown in his cause, he was secretly proposing to Russia to despoil him of all his recent acquisitions, by tearing from his brow the grand-ducal crown of Poland : at the moment that he was urging the Poles, by every consideration of patriotism and honour, to abide by his banners, as the only ones which could lead to the restoration of their lost nationality, he was himself suggesting its total destruction, by incorporating the grand-duchy of Warsaw with the Prussian monarchy, and making Warsaw the Prussian capital ; and while he was loudly denouncing the perfidy of Prussia, in abandoning his alliance, as naturally leading to its erasure from the book of nations, he was prepared to augment it by nearly five millions of Poles, provided in so doing he threw it towards the Russian frontier, and secured the extension of Westphalia, as far as the Oder, for his brother Jerome.¹

57.
Reflections
on Napo-
leon's perfi-
dious con-
duct on this
occasion.

¹ Hard, xii.
159.

While these important negotiations were in progress at the French headquarters, the Allied sovereigns had retired to the superb position, which they had selected and fortified with care, on the heights around Bautzen. Considerable reinforcements had there reached the army : several new corps of Prussians, under Kleist, burning for the liberation of the Fatherland, had arrived. Thorn capitulated on the 17th April, in consequence of the miserable state of the garrison, two thousand strong,

58.
Forces of
the opposite
armies at
Bautzen.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

April 17.

May 15.

which were made prisoners, and of the accidental explosion of the principal powder magazine. Barclay de Tolly, who commanded the besieging force, immediately broke up from the banks of the Vistula, and marched with such diligence, that he reached the Allied headquarters in Silesia on the 15th May, bringing with him a powerful reinforcement of fourteen thousand veteran soldiers. These, with other Russian detachments which had come up from the rear, amounted in all to twenty-five thousand men; and after deducting the loss at Lützen, and the subsequent combats, made the army nearly ninety thousand strong—nearly twenty thousand more than it had been in the last battle. But, on the other hand, the forces of Napoleon had increased in a still greater proportion; and it was already evident at the Allied headquarters, that, till the great reinforcements, under Sacken and Benningsen, came up from the interior of Russia, they had no chance of combating the French with any prospect of success, except by the aid of strong intrenchments. Not only were the Saxon troops, fourteen thousand strong, including three thousand excellent cavalry, now added to Napoleon's army, and their fortresses on the Elbe converted into a secure refuge in case of disaster, but the Würtemberg contingent, eight thousand good troops, had arrived. The heavy cavalry of Latour Maubourg, the Italian horse of General Fresia, and the second division of the Young Guard, under Barrois, had also joined the army. Altogether Napoleon's forces, under his own immediate command, were now raised to a hundred and fifty thousand men, of whom sixteen thousand were excellent cavalry.* The Allies, therefore, were now overmatched in the proportion of nearly two to one; and it was evident that, whatever the strength of the position at Bautzen might be,¹ it was liable to be turned and

1 Vict. et
Cong. xxii.
48. Précis,
Schoell,
Rec. ii. 317.
Fain, i. 398,
399. Jom.
iv. 299.

* "The new arrivals, with the troops who fought at Lützen, presented a total at the Emperor's command of a hundred and fifty thousand combatants."—*Vict. et Cong.* xxii. 48.

rendered untenable by an enemy having such superior forces at his command.

The Allies had availed themselves of the ten days' respite from active operations, which they had enjoyed since the evacuation of Dresden, to strengthen the position they had selected in a very formidable manner. Their principal stronghold was placed on the famous knolls of Klein Bautzen and Kreckwitz, where Frederick the Great found an asylum after his disasters at Hochkirch,* and where the strength of his position enabled him to bid defiance to the superior and victorious army of Count Daun. The ground which the Allied army now occupied was an uneven surface, interspersed with several small lakes; while its eminences terminated for the most part in little monticules or cones, forming so many round citadels, where artillery could most advantageously be placed, commanding the whole open country at their feet. The position in this uneven surface which they had chosen for their battle-field was composed of a series of heights running from the great frontier chain of Bohemia to the neighbourhood of the little lakes of Malschwitz and the village of Klix, behind which the right was stationed in a situation difficult of access. The Spree ran along the whole front of the first line of defence; and it was difficult to approach it in that direction, as well on account of the broken nature of the ground, and the variety of ravines, with streamlets in their bottom, by which it was intersected, as of the number of villages, constituting so many forts, occupied by the Allies, contained within its limits, and the hills planted with cannon, which commanded the whole open country. The principal of these villages were Klein Bautzen, Preititz, Klix, and Kreckwitz. This was the first line of defence; but behind it, at the distance of three miles in the rear,¹ was a second one strength-

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

59.

Description
of the position
of
Bautzen.

Atlas,
Plate 80.

¹ Personal
observation.
Fain, i. 403,
404. Odel. i.
86. Jom. iv.
300. Précis,
Schoell, ii.
320, 321.
Bign. xii.
109.

* Fought on the 14th October 1759; the very day on which, fifty-seven years afterwards, the more terrible disaster of Jena was incurred.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

ened by intrenchments closer together than the former, and still more capable of a protracted defence. This position, commencing at the village of Pielitz on the one flank, extended through the three villages of Rischen, Jenkwitz, and Baschütz, then fell back behind the marshy stream of the Keina, and, passing through Litten, terminated at the heights of Kreckwitz, which overhang the Spree.

60.
Reconnois-
sance of Na-
poleon, and
his general
plan of at-
tack.

The first design of Napoleon was to make his principal attack on the left wing of the Allies, which rested on the mountains that separate Saxony from Bohemia. After a minute reconnoissance, however, he was diverted from this design by observing the depth and intricacy of the wooded ravines and dells which intersected the slope of the mountains in that direction, and which might altogether obstruct the advance of his cavalry and artillery in that quarter. He continued his reconnoitring, therefore, along the whole line, and at eight at night advanced to the village of Klein Welka, almost within musket-shot of the outposts of the enemy, and then his plan of attack was formed. Orders had some time before been despatched to Ney, who had passed the Elbe at Torgau, with his own corps and those of Victor and Lauriston, to incline to his right, and, instead of moving on Berlin, as originally intended, to advance across the country, and come up so as to form the extreme left of the army in the great battle which was expected near Bautzen. These orders reached Ney on the 17th, and he immediately commenced his cross march, and arrived in the neighbourhood of the army on the evening of the 19th. It was on his wing, which was fully sixty thousand strong, that Napoleon relied for his principal effort, and placed his chief hopes of success, in attacking the enemy's position.¹

¹ Jom. iv.
301, 302.
Fain, i. 412,
413. Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
46, 47.

Ney, however, advanced in echelon, Lauriston in front, next his own corps, then Victor, and the Saxons under Reynier in the close of the array. The country through which his march lay, when he approached Bautzen, was

in great part covered with woods ; and this led to a very serious check being experienced in that quarter. To open up the communication with his troops, which were impatiently expected, Napoleon detached a division of Bertrand's corps towards the left, which soon got involved in the woods in which Ney's men were already entangled. The Allies, having received intelligence of the approach of this double body of the enemy, despatched Kleist with his Prussians to meet the first, and Barclay with the Russian veterans to encounter the second. Various success attended these different divisions. Bertrand's Italians, leisurely reposing in loose order after dinner, without any proper look-out, in a wood near Königswartha, were surprised and totally routed by Barclay de Tolly, with the loss of two thousand prisoners and eleven pieces of cannon. The whole division dispersed ; and it was only by taking refuge in the neighbouring neutral territory of Bohemia that the great bulk of them, above twenty thousand strong, escaped. During the action the village of Königswartha took fire, and was reduced to ashes. York at the same time encountered the whole corps of Lauriston ; and being unexpectedly assailed by superior forces, he was unable to keep his ground, though his troops fought with the most determined bravery. After a severe conflict, he was worsted, with the loss of above two thousand men ; so that success and disaster were nearly balanced on the left of the army.¹

The main position on which the Allies intended to give battle, and on the strength of which they relied to counterbalance the vast numerical superiority of the enemy, was the second line from Pielitz to Kreckwitz. Though it was not intended to abandon the first line along the banks of the Spree without a struggle, yet it was only designed to take off the first edge of the enemy's attack by resistance there ; and it was in this concentrated position in the rear, which was strongly

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

61.

Disaster of
Bertrand,
and bal-
anced suc-
cess on the
French left.

May 19.

¹Odel. i. 87,
88. Fain, i.
403, 405,
412. Jom.
iv. 300, 303.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
46, 47.
Lond. 39.

62.

Distribu-
tion of the
Allied army
in their
position.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

May 20.

fortified by redoubts, that the real stand was to be made. The Allied army, for this purpose, was a good deal scattered over the ground on which it was to combat, and on the morning of the 20th occupied the following positions :—On the left, Berg and York were stationed from Jenkwitz to Baschütz, with ten thousand Prussians. The plain from thence to Kreckwitz was not occupied by any infantry in the first line ; it was thought to be sufficiently protected by the superb regiments of Prussian cuirassiers which were stationed at its upper extremity in the second line, and by the heights of Kreckwitz, crowned with Blucher's guns, which commanded its whole extent. Blucher's infantry, about eighteen thousand strong, extended from Kreckwitz to Plieskowitz ; and still farther to the right, among little lakes, Barclay was stationed with fourteen thousand Russians at Klix and Gleina. Milaradowich, with ten thousand Russians, was placed in front of the whole, in Bautzen and its environs, with Kleist and five thousand Prussians near him on the heights of Burk. The second line consisted of the Russian Guards and reserve, sixteen thousand strong, who were about a mile in the rear behind the left and centre ; and near them were the magnificent Russian cuirassiers, eight thousand in number, who seemed more than a match for any French horse which could be brought against them.¹

¹ Précis in
Schoell, ii.
321, 322.
Jom. i. 302,
303. Lond.
43, 44.
Kausler,
869.

63.
General
aspect of
the Allied
position.

The whole line of the Allies, which thus formed a sort of semicircle, convex to the French, was somewhat above two leagues in length. But the chain of mountains on the Bohemian frontier, on which its left rested, required to be in part occupied itself, which rendered it necessary to extend the line above half a league farther in that direction. These mountains very much resembled those which flanked the extreme left of the English army at the battle of Talavera ; and their natural strength was much increased by batteries skilfully disposed. The marshes in the centre were a serious impediment, and the villages there were strongly intrenched ; while the nume-

rous guns, placed on the summit of the conical hills on the right-centre, commanded the whole plain in that direction. But the country beyond this was open, and intersected by roads in all directions; and the Russian extreme right was therefore removed, and in a manner detached from the rest of the army, so that there was no obstacle to the enemy's passing round the flank of the Allies in that quarter. It was easy to foresee, as well from the disposition he was making of his troops, as the known skill of the Emperor, that it was there his principal effort would be made.¹

On the morning of the 20th, Napoleon made his dispositions for the attack at all points. Wisely judging that the right wing of the Allies was the vulnerable point, he accumulated forces in that direction, so as to put at Ney's disposal about sixty thousand men. Ney, commanding this large force on the left, received orders to move upon Klix, pass the Spree, and from thence press on round the right flank of the enemy, towards Würschen and Weissenberg, so as to appear in their rear when the engagement in front was hottest. On the right, the Allied positions in the mountains were to be assailed by Oudinot, near Binnewitz; to his left, Macdonald was to throw a bridge of rafts over the Spree, and assault Bautzen; half a league still farther to the left, Marmont was directed to throw another bridge over the same river, and advance to the attack in the centre. The whole of the corps there were put under the direction of Soult: while the reserves and the Guards were in the rear, on the great road leading to Bischofswerda behind Bautzen, ready to succour any point that might require assistance. In this way the Emperor calculated that, while the Allies along their whole front would be equally matched, and possibly hard pressed, an overwhelming force of sixty thousand men would suddenly appear in their rear, and decide the victory²—an able conception, which his great superiority of numbers enabled him to carry completely into execu-

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Lond. 42,
43. Précis
in Schoell,
ii. 323, 324.
Odel. i. 91.64.
Napoleon's
plan of at-
tack.
May 20.² Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
48, 49. Jom.
iv. 303, 304.
Fain, i. 405.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

tion, and which bore a close resemblance to the famous circular sweep of Davoust, which led to such brilliant results at Ulm, and the corresponding march of Blucher from Wavre to La Belle Alliance, which proved so fatal to Napoleon at Waterloo.

65.

Passage of
the Spree,
and com-
mencement
of the ac-
tion.

At nine o'clock in the morning Napoleon was on horseback ; but such was the distance which the greater part of the columns had to march before they reached their destined points of attack, that it was near eleven o'clock before the passage of the Spree commenced. A powerful array of cannon was, in the first instance, brought up by the Emperor, and disposed along every projection which commanded the opposite bank. The fire, as far as the eye could reach, looking from the heights near Bautzen both to the right and left, soon became very violent, for the enemy's batteries answered with great spirit ; and the vast extent of the line of smoke, as well as the faint sound of the distant guns, gave an awful impression of the magnitude of the forces engaged on both sides. Under cover of this cannonade, the bridges in the centre were soon completed, and then a still more animating spectacle presented itself. The Emperor took his station on a commanding eminence on the banks of the Spree, near the point where Marmont's bridge was established, from whence he could overlook the whole field of battle, direct the movements of the troops, and enjoy the splendid spectacle which presented itself. And never, in truth, had war appeared in a more imposing form, nor had the astonishing amount of the forces at the disposal of the French Emperor ever been more conspicuous. On all sides the troops, preceded by their artillery, which kept up an incessant fire on the banks of the river, advanced rapidly towards the stream : at first the plain seemed covered with a confused multitude of horses, cannon, chariots, and men, stretching as far as the eye could reach, impressive only from its immensity. But gradually the throng assumed the appearance of order :¹

¹ Fain, 405,
406, Odel. i.
89. Lond.
44, 45. Vict.
et Conq.
xxii. 45.
Kausler,
870.

the cavalry, infantry, and artillery separated and defiled each to their respective points of passage, and the marvels of military discipline appeared in their highest lustre.

The French artillery, however, was superior to that of the Allies on the banks of the river, and it was not there that preparations for serious resistance had been made. Generally speaking, therefore, the passage was effected without much opposition. Bautzen, being no longer tenable as an isolated advanced post in the midst of the enemy, was evacuated by the Allies, who withdrew the troops that occupied it. It was taken possession of by Macdonald, who immediately caused his men to defile over its arch across the Spree; while Marmont threw over four bridges below the town, across which his whole corps was speedily transported; and Oudinot on the right passed without difficulty, and immediately began to advance towards the heights at the foot of the Bohemian mountains, on which the left of the Allies was posted. By five o'clock in the afternoon the river was passed at all points, and the troops were moving towards the eminences occupied by the enemy; but it was already evident, from the distance at which their principal forces were stationed, that no serious conflict would take place till the following day. On the French right, however, the action soon became extremely warm: Oudinot there pressed with indefatigable activity up the hills which form the Bohemian frontier, and which rose like an amphitheatre to bound the field of battle in that direction. The ascending line of the smoke, and the flashes of the artillery among the overhanging woods, soon showed the progress he was making; while the Bohemian echoes rolled back the roar of the artillery, and the glancing of the musketry was to be seen through the shadows of the woods, now deepened by approaching night. Prince Würtemberg, however, and St Priest's divisions of Miloradowich's corps, who had been sent to reinforce this

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

66.
Severe action on the
French
right.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Kausler,
871. Fain, i.
407. Précis
in Schoell,
ii. 325, 326.
Lond. 45.

part of the position, maintained themselves with invincible resolution in these woody fastnesses ; and when the Emperor Alexander, who commanded the Russians in person, saw that they were obliged to fall back, and were beginning to be overmatched, he reinforced them by three brigades of infantry, and one of cavalry, under General Diebitch, which restored the combat in that quarter. The Russians maintained themselves for the night in the villages of Pielitz, Mehltheuer, and Falkenberg, still keeping possession of the crest and commanding points of the mountains, while the French were far advanced in the valleys which furrowed their sides.¹

67.
Serious conflict in the
centre.

While this obstinate conflict was going on among the hills on the Allied left, a still more serious attack was made on Kleist's Prussians on the heights of Burk, and the remainder of Milaradowich's corps, under himself in person, on the eminences in rear of Bautzen, to which the Russians had retired after the evacuation of that town. At noon General Milaradowich was violently assailed by Campans' division, followed by the whole of Marmont's corps ; while Bonnet advanced towards Nieder Keina, and commenced an attack on Kleist. The resistance, however, was as obstinate as the attack ; and Napoleon, deeming it essential to his plan to make a great impression in that quarter, in order to withdraw attention from the grand movement he was preparing on his left, brought forward the whole of Bertrand's corps, still, notwithstanding its losses, above twenty-four thousand strong, with Latour Maubourg's formidable cuirassiers, to support Marmont and Macdonald. Above fifty thousand combatants were thus accumulated in the centre, supported by a powerful artillery ; and the Allies, being not more than half the number at that point, were constrained to retire. This was done, however, in the finest order ; the troops halting and facing about, by alternate companies, to fire, as they slowly withdrew towards the intrenched camp, their artillery keeping up an incessant discharge on the

pursuing columns. The French centre meanwhile steadily advanced, and, as soon as they reached it, assaulted Kleist's troops on the heights of Burk with great gallantry. Despite all their efforts, the brave Prussians maintained their ground with undaunted resolution. Their young ranks were thinned, but quailed not beneath the enemy's fire; and, seeing that they could not carry the position by an attack in front, the assailants attacked the village of Nieder Gurkau on its right, in order to threaten it in flank. Here, however, they experienced a vigorous resistance from Rudiger's men of Blucher's corps, some regiments of which had been detached, under Ziethen, to occupy that important point; and the fire of Blucher's guns, from the commanding heights immediately behind, was so violent, that, after sustaining immense losses, they were obliged to desist from the attempt. It was not till seven at night that, by bringing up the 10th regiment of light infantry to the charge, the village was carried by the French. Then the whole Allied centre slowly retired over the plateau of Nadelwitz, to their intrenched camp in the rear; but Blucher still retained his advanced position on the heights of Kreckwitz, from the summit of which his artillery never ceased to thunder, as from a fiery volcano, in all directions, till utter darkness drew a veil over the field of battle.¹

By the Emperor's orders, the French troops bivouacked in squares, on the ground they had won with so much difficulty. But though the Spree was passed at all points, and the right and centre were considerably advanced over the ground occupied in the morning by the enemy, yet the enormous losses they had sustained proved the desperate nature of the conflict in which they were engaged, and inspired the troops with melancholy presages as to the issue of the battle on the morrow. Kleist's and Ziethen's Prussians in particular, though in great part young troops who had seen fire for the first time that day, had evinced the most heroic bravery; no ground had been won from

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Précis in
Schoell, ii.
324, 325.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
49, 50.
Fain, i.
407, 408.
Kausler,
872, 873.

68.
Results of
the first
day's bat-
tle.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

them except by the force of overwhelming numbers ; and above ten thousand French and Italians lay weltering in their blood around the heights, from which the Prussians had drawn off every gun, every chariot, every wounded man. Napoleon, however, who was aware where the decisive blow was to be struck, was little concerned for the frightful carnage in his centre. His object had been gained by ground having been won, and the enemy compelled to concentrate their forces in that quarter ; and the sound of distant cannon on his extreme left, as well as the light of burning villages, which illuminated that quarter of the heavens, told how soon Ney would be in action in that direction. In effect, that marshal had crossed the Spree, near Klix ; and though Barclay de Tolly still held that village, and lay in strength betwixt it and Malschwitz, yet he was entirely ignorant of the strength of the enemy to whom he was soon to be opposed, and altogether unequal to the task of preventing the right of the Allies from being turned by the immense masses by whom he was surrounded on the following day. Napoleon, therefore, highly satisfied with the result of the first day's engagement, retired for the night to Bautzen, having first despatched orders to Oudinot to renew the combat by daybreak on the following morning, among the hills on the right, in order to fix the enemy's attention on that part of the line, and prevent any adequate succour being sent to avert the tremendous stroke he designed to deliver on the left.¹

¹ Kausler, 872, 874.
Jom. iv. 304.
Fain, i. 407, 409. Odel. i. 90. Vict. et Cong. xxii. 49, 50.

69.
Battle on the 21st. Success of the Russians on the French right.

By five o'clock on the morning of the 21st, the fire began with unwearied vigour in the wooded recesses of the Bohemian hills, and the echoes rang even to the summit of the Kunewald. The Emperor Alexander had sent such considerable reinforcements during the night to that quarter, that Milaradowich was enabled not only to repulse the attacks on his position on the heights of Mehltheuer, but to drive the enemy back to a considerable distance beyond Binnewitz. Napoleon,

alarmed at this unexpected turn of events on that side, immediately ordered up Macdonald's corps to the support of Oudinot ; and at the same time immense masses, above forty thousand strong, were deployed in the centre, in front of Bautzen, to arrest the attention of the enemy. They were kept, however, out of cannon-shot, as it was not his intention to expose his troops to the murderous fire of the Allied artillery on the heights of Kreckwitz, from which they had suffered so much on the preceding day. But before Macdonald could get up to his assistance, Oudinot was so hard pressed that he was unable to maintain his ground. Step by step the Russian tirailleurs gained upon the Bavarian sharpshooters in the woods ; and at length he was fairly driven out of the hills, and forced to assume a defensive position in the plain at their feet, where the arrival of Macdonald enabled him to stop the progress of the enemy.¹

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Kausler,
876, 877.
Odel. i. 91,
92. Précis
in Schoell,
ii. 327, 328.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
51.

Though much disconcerted by this ill success on his right, Napoleon was only desirous to gain time, and maintain his ground in front of Bautzen in the centre, as the progress and great superiority of Ney on the left rendered it a matter of certainty that ere long the Allies would be turned on their right, and forced to retreat. Marmont's and Bertrand's batteries, accordingly, were brought up to the foremost heights occupied by the French in that part of the field, and soon engaged in a tremendous cannonade with that of the Allies ; though the latter, placed on higher ground and fully better served, maintained its superiority, and rendered any attack by the masses of infantry in that quarter too perilous to be attempted. Meanwhile the Emperor listened anxiously for the sound of Ney's cannon on the extreme left, as that was the signal for which he waited to order a general attack in the centre to favour that decisive operation. In effect that marshal, at the head of his own corps and that of Lauriston, which was also placed under his orders, had early in the morning

70.
Progress of
the battle in
the French
centre and
left.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

advanced against the position of Barclay, near Gleina ; while Victor's corps and Reynier's Saxons were directed, by a wider circuit, to turn his extreme right by the wood and heights of Baruth, and get entirely into the rear of the Allies. Barclay's veterans were advantageously placed on the heights of Windmühlen Berg, near Gleina ; and the strength of their position, joined to the admirable fire of the artillery on its summit, long enabled these iron veterans of the Moscow campaign to make head against the superior numbers of the enemy. At length, however, the approach of Reynier's and Victor's corps took the position in flank, and Barclay was obliged to fall back, fighting all the way, to the heights of Baruth. There Kleist was detached to his support ; but his corps, reduced to little more than three thousand men by the losses of the preceding day, could not restore the action in that quarter. At eleven o'clock, Souham, with the leading division of Ney and Lauriston's corps, made himself master of the village of Preititz, near Klein Bautzen, behind Blucher's right, and between him and Barclay.¹

¹ Jom. iv. 304. Précis in Schoell, ii. 328, 329. Kausler, 878, 879. Fain, 413, 414. Vict. et Conq. xxii. 50, 51.

71.
Great effect of the movement of Ney on the left.

This important success promised the most momentous consequences ; for not only was Preititz directly in the rear of Blucher's position, so that the right of the Allies was now completely turned, but it communicated with Klein Bautzen, through which, or Kreckwitz, lay the sole communication of that general with the remainder of the army. This rendered it a matter of certainty that he must either follow the retrograde movement of Barclay, and uncover the whole right of the Allies, or be cut off. Ney's orders, communicated by General Jomini, his chief of the staff, were to march straight on the steeples of Hochkirch, while Lauriston moved by Baruth and Belgern in the same direction. In this instance the inspiration of genius had anticipated the orders of authority ; for Napoleon's instructions, written in pencil on the morning of the 21st, were only to be at Preititz by

eleven o'clock, whereas Ney was within half a mile of it by ten. The Emperor was lying on the ground in the centre, under the shelter of a height, a little in front of Bautzen, at breakfast, when the sound of Ney's guns in that direction was heard. At the same time, a bomb burst over his head. Without paying any attention to the latter circumstance, he immediately wrote a note in pencil to Marie Louise, to announce that the victory was gained; and, mounting his horse, set off at the gallop with his staff to the left, and ascended a height near Nieder Keina, from whence he could overlook the whole field of battle in the centre. At the same time he directed Soult, with the four corps under his orders, to assault with the bayonet the numerous conical knolls crowned with artillery, which formed the strength of the Allies in that quarter, in order to distract their attention, and prevent them from sending succours to Blucher on their right.¹

CHAP.
LXXV.
1813.

¹ Odel. i. 92,
93. Kausler,
878. *Jom.*
iv. 304, 305.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
51.

Blucher, who was fully alive to the importance of the village of Preititz, immediately made a great effort to regain it. Kleist was detached with the whole remains of his corps; and several Russian regiments of infantry, with two of Prussian cuirassiers, were sent in the same direction. The arrival of these fresh troops, who vied with each other in the ardour of their attack, enabled the Allies to regain the village, and drive out Souham, who was routed with great slaughter, and thrown back on the remainder of his corps in a state of utter confusion. At the same time twenty of Blucher's guns, playing on the flank of Ney's dense columns, did dreadful execution, and caused him to swerve from the direction of the steeples of Hochkirch, and establish himself on some heights behind Klein Bautzen, from whence his artillery could reply on equal terms to that of the enemy. This check probably saved the Allies from a total rout, by causing Ney to pause and vacillate in the midst of his important advance until his reserves came up, and Victor

72.
Preititz is
retaken by
Blucher,
and Ney
checked.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Odel. i. 92,
93. Précis
in Schoell,
ii. 331, 332.
Jom. iv.
306, 307.
Vict. et
Cong. xxii.
51, 52.

73.

Grand at-
tack of Na-
poleon on
the Allied
centre.

and Reynier had arrived abreast of his men. By this means the Allied sovereigns had time to take the proper measures to ward off the danger, by sending every disposable man and gun in that direction, where they had never hitherto apprehended any serious attack,—and preparing for a general retreat. It was not till one o'clock in the afternoon that Ney deemed himself in sufficient strength to resume the offensive, and by that time the season for decisive success had passed away ; the chaussée through Hochkirch, in the rear of the whole Allied army, could no longer be gained, and the victory at best would be barren of results.¹

Napoleon, however, made a vigorous effort, by a combined attack on the centre and left of the enemy, to effect a total overthrow. Seeing the Allied centre in some degree bared of troops by the powerful succours which had been sent to the right, he ordered Soult to make a general attack with the four corps under his command in the centre ; while, at the same time, the terrible artillery of the Guard was brought up to reply to the enemy's batteries on the heights of Kreckwitz. These orders were promptly obeyed. Marmont, Mortier, Bertrand, and Latour Maubourg, put themselves at the head of their respective corps of cavalry and infantry ; while the Imperial Guard, in deep array, advanced in their rear to support the attack. Eighty thousand men, in admirable order, moved against the redoubtable heights, the guns from which had so long dealt death among the French ranks ; while a hundred pieces of cannon, disposed on the highest points of the ground which they traversed, kept up a vehement fire on the enemy's batteries. This grand attack soon changed the fortune of the day. Blucher, now assailed in front by Marmont, in flank by Bertrand, and in rear by Ney, was soon obliged to recall Kleist and the other reinforcements which he had sent to the assistance of Barclay de Tolly ;² and in consequence, Ney, whose reserves had at length

² Jom. iv.
308, 309.
Odel. i. 92,
93. Fain, i.
414, 415.
Kausler,
380, 381.
Vict. et
Cong. xxii.
52, 53.

come up, was enabled not only to retake Preititz without difficulty, but to spread out his light troops over the whole level ground as far as Würschen. The Allied right was thus entirely turned ; and any advantage which Blücher and Barclay de Tolly might gain would only increase the danger of their position, by drawing them on towards the Spree, while a superior force of the enemy was interposed between them and the main body of their army.

In these critical circumstances the Allied sovereigns resolved to retreat. They might, indeed, by bringing up the reserves, and the Russian and Prussian Guards, have without difficulty regained the ground they had lost on the right, and again advanced their standards to the Spree ; but as long as Lauriston and Reynier were in their rear, such success would only have augmented their ultimate danger ; just as a similar success by Napoleon on the left of the British at Waterloo would have enhanced the perils of his own position, when Blücher, with sixty thousand Prussians, was menacing the chaussée of La Belle Alliance. It had also, from the outset of the campaign, been part of their fixed policy, never to place themselves in danger of undergoing a total defeat, but to take advantage of their numerous cavalry to cover their retreat, whenever the issue of an action seemed doubtful ; being well aware that the superiority of their physical resources and moral energy would thus in the end, especially if the accession of Austria were obtained, secure to them the victory. Orders were given, therefore, to both Barclay and Blücher to retire ; and the whole Allied army, arrayed in two massy columns, began to withdraw ; the Russians by the road of Hochkirch and Lobau, the Prussians by that to Weissenberg.¹

Then was seen in its highest lustre the admirable arrangements of modern discipline, and the noble feelings with which both armies were animated. Seated on the summit of the Hoheberg, near Keina, from whence he could survey a great part of the field of battle,

CHAP.
LXXV.
1813.

74.
The Allies
resolve to
retreat.

¹ Précis in
Schoell, ii.
35. Jom. iv.
308, 309.
Odel. i. 93,
94. Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
52, 53.

75.
Sublime
spectacle
when the
Allied army
retreated.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

Napoleon calmly directed the movements of his army; and the mighty host which he commanded, now roused to the highest pitch, and moving on in perfect array, pressed at all points upon the retiring columns of the enemy. It was at once a sublime and animating spectacle, when, at the voice of this mighty wizard, a hundred and fifty thousand men, spread over a line of three leagues in length, from the Bohemian mountains on the right to the forest of Baruth on the left, suddenly started, as it were, into life, and moved majestically forward, like a mighty wave, bearing the light and smoke of the guns as sparkling foam on its crest. The greater part of this vast inundation poured into the valley of Nieder Keina in the centre, and the declining sun glanced on the forests of bayonets, and the dazzling lines of helmets, sabres, and cuirasses, with which the level space at its bottom was filled; while the heights of Kreckwitz, yet in the hands of the enemy, thundered forth a still unceasing fire on all sides, like a volcano encircled by flame.¹

¹ Schoell, 332. Kausler, 882. Fain, i. 415, 416. Jom. iv. 309.

76.
Termination of the battle.

Soon the receding line of fire, and the light of the burning villages, told that the consuming torrent was rapidly advancing through the valley; and at length the cannonade ceased on the summits of Kreckwitz, and Blucher's columns, dark and massy, were seen slowly wending their way to the rear. In vain, however, the French cuirassiers, eight thousand strong, were now hurried to the front, and endeavoured by repeated charges to throw the enemy into confusion, so as to convert the retreat into a flight; the Russian cavalry was too powerful, the Allied array too perfect, to permit any advantage being gained. A hundred and twenty French guns preceded the line of the pursuers, and thundered on the retiring columns of the enemy; but the Russian and Prussian artillery was equally powerful, and, taking advantage of the numerous eminences which the line of retreat afforded, played with destructive effect on the advancing masses;² while their numerous and magnificent cavalry repulsed every attempt

² Fain, i. 415, 417. Kausler, 882, 883. Odel. i. 94, 95. Précis in Schoell, ii. 332, 333. Jom. iv. 309, 310. Vict. et Conq. xxii. 53, 54.

to charge which the French horsemen made. Gradually the fire became less violent as the Allies receded from the field ; the intrenched position was abandoned on all sides ; and at length the cannonade entirely ceased, and night drew her veil over that field of carnage and of glory.

Napoleon's tent was pitched for the night near the inn of Klein-Purschwitz, in the middle of the squares of his faithful Guard ; while Ney established himself at Würschen, where the Allied Sovereigns had had their headquarters the night before. It was from the former place that the Emperor dictated the bulletin of the battle, as well as the following decree, which all lovers of the arts, as well as admirers of patriotic virtue, must regret was prevented, by his fall, from being carried into execution : —“ A monument shall be erected on Mont Cenis ; on the most conspicuous face the following inscription shall be written—‘ The Emperor Napoleon, from the field of Würschen, has ordered the erection of this monument in testimony of his gratitude to the people of France and Italy. This monument will transmit from age to age the remembrance of that great epoch, when, in the space of three months, twelve hundred thousand men flew to arms to protect the integrity of the French empire.’ ”¹

The Emperor Alexander commanded the Allied armies in person at Bautzen ; the ill success at Lützen having weakened the confidence of the soldiers in Wittgenstein, and the jealousies of the generals rendering the appointment of any inferior officer a matter of great difficulty. With the King of Prussia by his side, he took the entire direction of the movements, and displayed a judgment in council, and coolness in danger, which excited universal admiration. It was with difficulty that the entreaties of those around him could prevent him from advancing too far into the fire for the duties of a commander-in-chief. As it was, he incurred the greatest risk, and near Bautzen narrowly escaped falling into the hands of the enemy. The conduct of the retreat, in the face of the immense

CHAP.
LXXV.
1813.

77.
Napoleon's
proposal for
a monument
on Mont
Cenis to
commemo-
rate this
epoch.

¹ Fain, i.
417, 418.
Odel. i. 97.

78.
Admirable
conduct of
the Empe-
ror Alex-
ander dur-
ing the
battle.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Lond. 46.
Odel. i.
97, 98.
Michaud,
Biog. Univ.
Sup. i. 176.
Fain, i. 414.
Kausler, 88.

79.

Losses on
both sides
in the bat-
tle.

force which thundered in pursuit, was a model of skill and judgment. Every eminence, every enclosure, every stream, which offered an opportunity of arresting the enemy, was taken advantage of with admirable ability; and such were the losses which the French sustained in pressing on the unconquerable rearguard, that, at daybreak on the following morning, the Russians still held the heights of Weissenberg, within cannon-shot of the field of battle.¹

The loss of the French in the battle of Bautzen was considerably greater than that of the Allies—an unusual but not unprecedented circumstance with a victorious army, but which is easily explained by the carnage occasioned in Napoleon's masses by the Prussian artillery, in position on the numerous eminences which commanded the field of battle, and by the perfect order with which the retreat was conducted.* The Allies lost in the two days fifteen thousand men killed and wounded; and the French took fifteen hundred prisoners, most of them wounded. But neither stores nor artillery graced their triumph; and their own loss was fully nineteen thousand killed and wounded on the field alone, independent of those who fell on the previous day; insomuch that twenty thousand wounded were lodged, two days after the battle, at Bautzen, and the villages in its environs; while five thousand were killed outright on the field of battle.^{2†} A great number of the wounded were slightly hurt only in the

²Fain, i. 96,
97. Schoell,
ii. 334. Odel.
i. 96. Kaus-
ler, 884.

* The same thing had previously occurred at Malplaquet, where the Allies lost twenty thousand, the French fourteen thousand men, though the former gained the victory.—Coxe's *Life of Marlborough*, iv. 64.

† "Twenty-two thousand were brought into the hospitals of the Grand Army, from the 1st May to the 1st June 1813, exclusive of those of the enemy." —BARON LARREY, iv. 177. And this return embraced only the serious cases. So great was the number of persons slightly wounded, who were not admitted to the hospitals, that it was strongly suspected at the time that many, especially of the Italian conscripts, had intentionally wounded themselves slightly in the hand, in order to avoid, at least for a time, the dangers and fatigues of the campaign. The number so wounded was no less than two thousand six hundred and thirty-two. The Emperor inclined to the same opinion, and was preparing a severe decree on the subject, when he was diverted from his design by the humane and politic Larrey, who proved, by actual experiment, that inexperienced troops, firing three deep, were extremely apt to injure the hands

hands and feet—an ominous circumstance, which had been observed also in the campaign of 1809 on the Danube, and bespoke the anxiety of the conscripts to escape from these scenes of carnage.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

The Saxon peasants displayed unbounded kindness to these unhappy sufferers. Without regard to side, nation, or language, they received them into their cottages, and did all in their power to mitigate their distresses; and, not contented with waiting till the sufferers were brought into their dwellings, they themselves issued forth to seek them on the field. On all sides were to be seen men, women, and children, carrying litters, pushing wheelbarrows, or drawing little carts, laden with wounded men. Russians were laid beside French, Prussians beside Italians; the women tended the dying, and bandaged the wounds alike of friend and foe: all the animosity of the contest was forgotten; and at the close of one of the bloodiest battles recorded in modern times, was to be seen the glorious spectacle of Christian charity healing the wounds and assuaging the sufferings equally of the victors and the vanquished.¹

80.
Great kindness of the Saxon peasants to the wounded on both sides.

¹ Précis in Schoell, ii. 334. Fain, 96, 97. Odel. i. 96. Lond. 49.

By daybreak on the following morning the French army was in motion, and Napoleon, who had hardly allowed himself any rest during the night, in person directed their movements. They soon came up with the rearguard of the enemy, who had marched all night, and

81.
Combat of Reichenbach.

of the front rank; and in this report the Emperor deemed it prudent to acquiesce.—See *Souvenirs de CAULAINCOURT*, i. 170, 172; and *LARREY*, iv. 171, 179. But General Mathieu Dumas, who saw great numbers of these wounded at Dresden, has recorded his decided opinion, that many of these wounds were self-inflicted. “I observed,” says he, “with keen regret, many of the wounded but slightly hurt; the greater part young conscripts who had recently joined the army, and who had not been injured by the fire of the enemy, but had themselves mutilated their feet and hands. Such accidents of bad augury had also been observed during the campaign of 1809. The Emperor interrogated me closely on the subject, and as I made no concealment of the truth, he ordered an inquiry. The report of the commission, however, was opposed to my too well-founded observations; and the Emperor believed, or feigned to believe, those who, to pay their court to him, disguised the truth on a painful but important subject.”—*Souvenirs de DUMAS*, iii. 507.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

now stood firm on the heights behind Reichenbach, in order to gain time for the immense files of chariots, cannon, and wounded men, to defile by the roads in their rear. Milaradowich had the command; and the veterans of the Moscow campaign were prepared to defend the position to the last extremity; while forty pieces of cannon were admirably placed on the summit, and a large body of cuirassiers on the slopes seemed awaiting an opportunity to come to blows with the horsemen of the French. Struck with the strength of this position, as well as the determined countenance of the Allied force which occupied it, Napoleon paused, and engaged only in a cannonade till the cavalry of the Guard came up. Reichenbach itself, in front of the Allied position, occupied by the Russian light troops, was only abandoned after an obstinate conflict; and when the French columns showed themselves on the opposite side, they were torn in pieces by the point-blank discharge of the enemy's batteries from the heights behind. The Russian general sent some of his regiments of cavalry into the plain, where they were immediately charged by the red lancers of the French Guard; but the latter were defeated with considerable loss.¹

¹ Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
54, 55. Fain,
i. 424. Odel.
i. 97. Lond.
50.

82.
Firm resist-
ance of the
Allies, who
at length
retire.

Napoleon upon this brought up Latour Maubourg, with the whole cavalry of the Guard, six thousand strong, and at the same time made dispositions for outflanking and turning the enemy. These measures were attended with the desired effect, and after several brilliant charges on both sides, the Allies retired toward Görlitz, but in the best order. Enraged at seeing his enemy thus escaping, Napoleon hastened to the advanced posts, and himself pressed on the movements of the troops, insomuch that the rays of the setting sun gleamed on the sabres and bayonets of fifty thousand men, accumulated in a front of a mile and a half in breadth, and closely advancing in pursuit. But it was all in vain. The enemy, proud of the resistance they had made against such superior numbers, retired in

admirable order, without leaving anything behind. Guns, wounded, caissons, were alike conveyed away; and all the genius of the Emperor, which never shone forth with brighter lustre in directing the movements, could not extract one trophy from their rearguard. Napoleon could not conceal his vexation at beholding the unbroken array of the Allied troops thus eluding his grasp, and the skill with which they availed themselves of every eminence to plant their guns and arrest his progress. "What!" said he, "after such a butchery, no results? no prisoners? Those fellows there will not leave us a nail; they rise from their ashes. When will this be done?"¹

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Fain, i.
424, 425.
Odel. i. 97,
100. Lond.
50. Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
54, 55. Souv.
de Caulain-
court, i. 174.
Bign. xii.
114.

The balls at this moment were flying thick around him, and one of the Emperor's escort fell dead at his feet. "Duroc," said he, turning to the grand-marshal, who was by his side, "fortune is resolved to have one of us to-day." Some of his suite observed with a shudder, in an under breath, that it was the anniversary of the battle of Essling, and the death of Lannes.² The melancholy anticipation was not long of being realised. The enemy retired to a fresh position, behind the ravine of Makersdorf; and Napoleon, who was anxious to push on before night to Görlitz, himself hurried to the front, to urge on the troops who were to dislodge them from the ground which they had occupied to bar the approach to it. His suite followed him, four a-breast, at a rapid trot through a hollow way, in such a cloud of dust that hardly one of the riders could see his right-hand man. Suddenly a cannon-ball glanced from a tree near the Emperor, and struck a file behind, consisting of Mortier, Caulaincourt, Kirgener, and Duroc. In the confusion and dust, it was not at first perceived who was hurt; but a page soon arrived and whispered in the Emperor's ear, that Kirgener was killed, and Duroc desperately wounded. Larrey and Ivan instantly came up, but all their efforts were unavailing; Duroc's entrails were torn out, and the dying man was carried into a cot-

83.
Death of
Duroc.

² *Ante*, ch.
lvii. § 59,
on May 22,
1809.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

tage near Makersdorf. Napoleon, profoundly affected, dismounted, and gazed long on the battery from whence the fatal shot had issued. He then entered the cottage, and ascertained, with tears in his eyes, that there was no hope.* “Duroc,” said he, pressing the hand of the dying hero, “there is another world, where we shall meet again!” Memorable words, wrung by anguish even from the child of Infidelity and the Revolution! Finally, when it was announced some hours afterwards that all was over, he put into the hands of Berthier, without articulating a word, a paper, ordering the construction of a monument on the spot where he fell, with this inscription:—Here the General Duroc, Duke of Friuli, grand-marshal of the palace to the Emperor Napoleon, gloriously fell, struck by a cannon-ball, and died in the arms of the Emperor, his friend.”¹

¹ *Souv. de*
Caul. i. 176,
179. Odel.
i. 100, 101.
Fain, i. 427,
429.

84.
Mournful
scene round
the tent of
Napoleon.

Napoleon pitched his tent in the neighbourhood of the cottage where Duroc lay, and seemed for the time altogether overwhelmed by his emotions. The squares of the Old Guard, respecting his feelings, arranged themselves at a distance; and even his most confidential attendants did not, for some time, venture to approach his person. Alone he sat, wrapped in his gray great-coat, with his forehead resting on his hands, and his elbows on his knees, a prey to the most agonising reflections. In vain Caulaincourt and Maret at length requested his attention to the most pressing orders. “To-morrow—everything,” was the only reply of the Emperor, as he again resumed his attitude of meditation. A mournful silence reigned around; the groups of officers at a little distance hardly articulated above their breath; gloom and depression

* “*Così vago è il pallore, e da’ sembianti*
Di morte una pietà sì dolce spira;
Ch’ammolli il cor che fu dur marmo avanti,
E ’l pianto scaturì di mezzo all’ira.
Tu piangi, Soliman? tu che distrutto
Mirasti il regno tuo col ciglio asciutto?”

TASSO, *Ger. Lib. ix.* 86.

appeared in every countenance ; while the subdued hum of the soldiers preparing their repast, and the sullen murmur of the artillery waggons as they rolled in the distance, alone told that a mighty host was assembled in the neighbourhood. Slowly the moon rose over this melancholy scene ; the heavens became illuminated by the flames of the adjoining villages, which had fallen a prey to the license of the soldiers ; while the noble bands of the Imperial Guard played alternately triumphal and elegiac strains, in the vain hope of distracting the grief of their chief. Could the genius of painting portray the scene, could the soul of poetry be inspired by the feelings which all around experienced, a more striking image could not be presented of the mingled woes and animation of war ; of the greatness and weakness of man ; of his highest glories, and his nothingness against the arm of his Creator.¹ *

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Odel. i.
101, 103.
Fain, i.
427, 429.
Souv. de
Caul. i.
177, 179.

The loss of Duroc and Kirgener, and of General Bruyères, who also fell on the same day, as well as the firm countenance and admirable array of the Allies, who retired after a bloody battle, in which they had been worsted, without the loss of cannon or prisoners in the pursuit, and with no considerable diminution of baggage, occasioned the most gloomy presentiments in the French army. It was plain that the days of Austerlitz and Jena were past. A great victory had been gained without any result ; and the victors, in the pursuit, had sustained both a greater and more important loss than the vanquished. Little hopes remained of subduing an enemy who thus rose up with renewed vigour from every disaster.

85.
General des-
pendency of
the French
generals.

* Napoleon at the time, to testify his regard for Duroc, placed two hundred napoleons in the hands of the owner of the house, jointly with the clergymen of the parish, for the purpose of erecting a monument to his memory. The monument, however, was never erected ; and by an order of the Russian état-major, dated 1st April 1814, the money was reclaimed by the Allies, and not applied to its destined purpose—an unworthy proceeding, forming a striking contrast to the noble conduct of the Archduke Charles, in 1796, regarding the French tomb of General Marceau.—See *Order of BARON ROSEN*, 1st April 1814, in FAIN, i. 430 ; and *Ante*, Chap. XXI. § 53.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

With truth might Napoleon have said with Pyrrhus—
“Another such victory, and I am undone.” Murmurs, regrets, expressions of despair, were heard even among the most resolute : the flames, which rose on all sides as the villages were taken possession of, at once bespoke the obstinacy of the resistance, and the determination of the inhabitants ; and even the bravest sometimes exclaimed, on beholding the universal spirit with which the people were animated — “What a war ! we shall all leave our remains here.” Napoleon was no stranger to the feelings of despondency which were so common even around his headquarters, and he gave vent to his spleen by cutting sarcasms against his principal officers. “I see well, gentlemen,” said he, “that you are no longer inclined to make war : Berthier would rather follow the chase at Grosbois ; Rapp sighs after his beautiful hotel at Paris. I understand you ; I am no stranger to the pleasures of the capital.”¹

¹ Rapp,
Mém. 166.
Fain, i. 433.
Odel. i. 107.

86.
Retreat of
the Allies
towards
Liegnitz.

Atlas,
Plate 85.

On the 23d, the Allied army continued to retreat, still in two columns, after having broken down the bridges over the Neisse : the right column moved upon Waldau, the left upon Lobau. At nine o'clock the Saxon advanced posts appeared before Görlitz, and, finding the bridge broken down, after some delay and warm skirmishing, forced the passage of the river, and, by hastily erecting five new bridges, soon crossed over so large a force as rendered the town no longer tenable by the Allies. The Emperor arrived at Görlitz a few hours after, and rested there the remainder of that and the whole of the next day, shut up with Caulaincourt in his cabinet, and constantly occupied with diplomatic arrangements. Meanwhile the Allies continued their retreat, and the French pressed the pursuit in three columns : the right skirting the Bohemian mountains, and following Wittgenstein ; the centre following Blucher and Barclay de Tolly on the great road to Liegnitz ; the left marching upon Glogau, the garrison of which, now blockaded for above three

months, anxiously expected their deliverance. Although no attempt was made to defend any positions, yet the French cavalry frequently came up with that of the Allies, and some sharp encounters took place between the horse on both sides. But the dragoons of Napoleon, for the most part cased in cuirasses, or heavily armed, were no match in this desultory warfare for the nimble children of the desert; and the pursuers suffered more under the lances of the Cossacks, than the retreating cavalry did from the French sabres.¹

CHAP.
LXXXV.
1813.

¹ Fain, i.
437, 439.
Odel. i. 106.
Vict. et
Cong. xxii.
55, 56.

No attempt was made by the Allies to defend the passage of the Queis, the Bober, or the Katzbach, although their rocky banks and deeply furrowed ravines offered every facility for retarding the advance of the enemy. The Emperor Alexander was making for an intrenched camp prepared near Schweidnitz, and was desirous of avoiding any serious encounter till it was reached. On the 26th, however, an opportunity occurred of striking a considerable blow, near Haynau, upon the advanced column of Lauriston's corps. After the troops under Maison had passed that town, and were traversing the valley of the Theisse, without having explored the surrounding heights, a signal was suddenly given by setting fire to a windmill, and almost before the French had time to form square, the enemy's cavalry, consisting of three strong Prussian regiments, were upon them. The French dragoons, who were at the head of the column, instantly fled back to Haynau, leaving the infantry to their fate. They were speedily broken, and the whole artillery of the column, consisting of eighteen pieces, taken, with four hundred men made prisoners, besides an equal number killed and wounded. From the want of horses, however, only twelve of the guns could be brought off. This affair, which cost the life of Colonel Dolfs, the Prussian commander, who gloriously fell in the midst of the enemy's squares, would have been still more decisive but for the uncontrollable impatience of the Prussian dragoons,² whose ardour made

87.
Combat and
defeat of the
French near
Haynau.

May 26.

² Lond. 51,
52. Vict. et
Cong. xxii.
36, 37. Odel.
i. 106, 107.
Fain, i. 440.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ *Ante*, ch.
lxviii. §§
82, 83.

88.
Continu-
ance of the
retreat to
Liegnitz
and the
Oder.
May 27.

them break into a charge before the proper moment had arrived. As it was, however, it was one of the most brilliant cavalry actions which occurred during the war, and may justly be placed beside the splendid charge of the heavy German dragoons on the French infantry, on the 23d of July in the preceding year, the day after the battle of Salamanca.¹ *

Napoleon was severely mortified by this check, not so much from the amount of the loss he had sustained, which, in such a host, was a matter of little importance, but from the decisive proof which it afforded, in the eyes of both armies, of the undiminished spirit and unbroken array of the Allied forces. On the very day following, however, his arms had their revenge. General Sebastiani, at the head of the cavalry of Victor's corps, which was advancing by forced marches towards Glogau to relieve the garrison, fell in near Sprottau with a Russian convoy, which was moving, unaware of the victory that had been gained, up to the main army, and captured the whole, consisting of twenty-two pieces and sixty tumbrils, with the guard of four hundred men. In other quarters, however, from being longer accustomed to the vicinity of the enemy, the Allies were better on their guard. Eight squadrons of Russian cavalry on the same day attacked, near Gottesberg, twelve squadrons of Napoleon's cuirassiers, and defeated them, with the loss of four hundred prisoners; a partisan corps captured a considerable park of artillery; while Woronzoff's cavalry fell in with a large body of the enemy's cavalry near Dessau, on the Elbe, put them to the rout, and made five hundred prisoners. Meanwhile, the main body of the Allies retired without further molestation by Liegnitz to the neighbourhood of Schweidnitz, where the intrenched camp had been constructed, and where it was intended that a stand should be made.²

² Lond. 52,
53. Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
56, 57.
Odel. i. 112,
113. Fain,
i. 440.

These partial successes, however, determined nothing; and the progress of the French arms, as well as the

position of their forces, had now become such as to excite just inquietude in the breasts of the Allied sovereigns. The great line of communication with Poland and the Vistula was abandoned; the blockading force before Glogau withdrew on the approach of the enemy; and the garrison, which had nearly exhausted its means of subsistence, was relieved, amidst transports of joy on both sides, on the 29th. All the Allied forces were concentrated in the neighbourhood of Schweidnitz, or between Liegnitz and that place; and although the intrenched camp, resting on the former fortress, was of great strength, yet it could not be disguised that it was close to the foot of the Bohemian mountains; and that if Austria, in reliance on whose ultimate co-operation this direction had been given to the Allied forces, should prove unfaithful to the cause of Europe, they would find it next to impossible to regain their communication with the Oder and the Vistula, the only base for military operations on which in that event they could rely. Great reinforcements, indeed, fully fifty thousand strong, were on their march from Russia—and an equal force was in progress in Prussia. But some weeks, at the least, must elapse before the most forward of them could reach the Allied headquarters; and if the diverging march to the extremity of Upper Silesia were much longer to be pursued, the French might interpose between their main army and the succours on which they relied. The Russians, by the morning state on 27th May, numbered only thirty-five, the Prussians twenty-five thousand effective soldiers: ill success and retreat had produced its usual effect in diminishing the number of available men, and the abandonment of the line of communication with Poland, had occasioned great difficulty in turning aside the convoys from the road they were pursuing, one of which, as before mentioned, had already actually fallen into the enemy's hands.¹

CHAP.

LXXV.

1813.

89.

Reasons
which in-
duced the
Allied sove-
reigns to
desire an
armistice.

¹ Lond. 55,
56. Odel. i.
109, 110.
St-Cyr,
Hist. Mil.
iv. 50, 51.

With reason, therefore, Napoleon regarded the present

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

90.

Great satisfaction of Napoleon at this state of affairs.

state of affairs as highly auspicious to his arms, and the soldiers participated in his satisfaction from the ample supplies of everything which they obtained in the rich agricultural districts of Upper Silesia ; exhibiting a marked contrast to the extreme penury, almost amounting to famine, which they had experienced in the wasted fields of Saxony and Lusatia. Delivered by these favourable circumstances from the melancholy forebodings which the death of Duroc and the imperfect success at Bautzen had occasioned, the Emperor recovered all his former serenity of mind. He was constantly with the advanced posts, and directed their movements with extraordinary precision ; while the gaiety of his manner, which appeared in the multitude of the questions which he asked, and the French and Italian songs which he hummed as he rode along, bespoke the hopes with which he was inspired as to the issue of the campaign. A gleam of sunshine shone for a brief period upon his career, and recalled, midway between the disasters of Moscow and the overthrow of Leipsic, the triumphs of his earlier years. Again, as in former days, the Allied armies were recoiling before his arms ; province after province was overrun by his followers ; and already one-half of the prophecy which he had uttered to the Abbé de Pradt at Warsaw had been accomplished :¹—“Success will render the Russians bold : I am going to raise three hundred thousand men : I will deliver two battles between the Elbe and the Oder : and in six months I shall be on the Niemen.”²

¹ *Ante*, ch. lxxiii. § 110.
² Fain, i. 444, 445.
Odel. i. 110, 112. St-Cyr, Hist. Mil. iv. 50, 51.
Lond. 55.

91.

Reasons which nevertheless induced Napoleon to desire an armistice.

Although, however, appearances were thus favourable at headquarters, and in the grand army under the immediate command of Napoleon, yet this was far from being the case universally ; and many circumstances, both in his military and political situation, were calculated to awaken the most serious apprehensions. Though his infantry and artillery were in great strength, and had for the most part surpassed his expectations, the cavalry of the grand army was still extremely deficient. This

want both rendered it impossible to obtain decisive success in the field, and, even if an advantage was there obtained, made any attempt to follow it up more hazardous to the victorious than to the vanquished party. The weakness arising from this cause was the more sensibly felt by Napoleon, that he had in his previous campaigns made such constant and successful use of this arm ; and that the vehemence and rapidity of his operations savoured rather of the fierce sweep of Asiatic conquest, than the slow and methodical operations of European warfare. The same cause had exposed him to great inconveniences in his rear, where the Allied partisans had in many places crossed the Elbe, and carried the enthusiasm of their proclamations, and the terror of their arms, far into the Westphalian plains. But, most of all, he had reason to apprehend the armed mediation of Austria. Facts, more convincing than words, here spoke with decisive authority as to the thunderbolt which might ere long be expected to issue from the dark cloud that overhung the Bohemian mountains. The forces which the cabinet of Vienna had already accumulated on that frontier range, little short of a hundred thousand men, enabled its ambassador, Count Stadion, who was still at the Allied headquarters, to speak almost with the tone of command to the belligerent powers ; while the direction which the Allied armies had now taken upon Liegnitz, Schweidnitz, and Upper Silesia, to the entire abandonment of their great line of communication with Poland and their own resources, seemed to leave no doubt of a secret understanding with the Austrian government, and an intention to base their future operations on the great natural fortress of Bohemia.¹

The accounts also from the rear at this period were of so alarming a description, that it is not surprising they exercised a predominant influence on the mind of the Emperor ; the more especially as the recent experience of the Moscow campaign had vividly impressed on his mind

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ St-Cyr,
Hist. Mil.
iv. 50, 51.
Jom. iv.
313, 314.
Fain, 434,
435. Lond.
54, 55.

92.
Important
partisan
successes in
the French
rear.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ *Ante*, ch.
lxxv. § 87.May 30.
² *Vict. et*
Conq. xxii.
60. *Jom.* iv.
315. *London*.
63, 64.93.
Repulse of
Oudinot at
Luckau.
June 4.

the dangers of a general interruption of his communications in that direction. General Bulow, who had the command of the forces around Berlin, and in front of Magdeburg, being relieved of all apprehensions for the capital by the march of Ney's corps to Silesia, had pushed his partisan bodies in all directions, and kept the enemy in continual apprehension for his detached parties and communications. Independent of the brilliant success of Woronzoff's cavalry near Dessau, which has been already mentioned,¹ General Zastroff, who commanded the Prussian landwehr, had made the greatest exertions, and not only afforded the most efficient aid to the desultory warfare beyond the Elbe, but prepared a large body of men ready to join the Allied army in regular battle. General Chernicheff left the Lower Elbe; and having learned, while lying between Magdeburg and the Havel, that the Westphalian general Ochs was at Halberstadt, on the left bank of the Elbe, with a convoy of artillery, he resolved to surprise him. Having forthwith crossed the river with his indefatigable hussars and Cossacks, on the evening of the 29th May, he marched all day and night, and at five on the following morning reached the enemy, thirteen German, or nearly fifty English, miles distant. The surprise was complete; and, although a desperate resistance was made, it terminated in the capture or destruction of the whole enemy's detachment, twelve hundred strong, with fourteen pieces of cannon. The ammunition-waggons were all blown up by the French, to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy.²

Nor was Marshal Oudinot, who, after the battle of Bautzen, had been detached from the grand army to oppose Bulow in the neighbourhood of Magdeburg, more fortunate. The Prussian general took post at Luckau, with twelve thousand men, where he threatened the French line of communications, and strengthened himself, as well as circumstances would admit, by means of loop-

holes and barricades. Oudinot attacked him there on the 4th June ; but such was the vigour of the Prussian defence, that though the assailants succeeded in carrying the suburbs, which they set on fire, they could not penetrate into the town, and retreated at night, leaving five hundred prisoners and three guns in the hands of the victors, besides above fifteen hundred killed and wounded during the engagement. Immediately after this repulse, which diffused extraordinary joy over the neighbouring territory of Prussia, Bulow was joined by Generals Borsstell, Borgen, and Harps, which raised his troops to nineteen thousand men, and their united forces threatened a most powerful diversion in the rear of the enemy.¹

This brilliant success, and the evident inferiority of the French to the Allies both in the number and activity of their light troops, encouraged the gallant partisan leaders of the latter to attempt a still more important enterprise. Chernicheff, who had recrossed the Elbe after the affair at Halberstadt, having learned that General Arrighi was at Leipsic with five thousand men, besides an equal number of wounded, and considerable magazines, communicated with Woronzoff, who commanded the Russian blockading force that lay before Magdeburg, and they agreed to make a joint attack on that important depot. With this view, Chernicheff took up a position with some parade at Bernburg, so as to withdraw the enemy's attention from the real point of attack ; and Woronzoff having meanwhile advanced to Delitch, in the neighbourhood of Leipsic, Chernicheff, by a forced march of nine German, or thirty-five English, miles in one day, joined him under the walls of the town. The French were so completely taken by surprise, that they had scarcely time to assume a position at Taucha, in front of the town, when the Russian horse were upon them. The few cavalry they had were routed in a moment ; and though their infantry opposed a more formidable resistance, yet they too were broken and driven back into the town, before half of the

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Lond. 63,
65. Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
60. Jom. iv.
315.

94.
Attack on
the French
depot at
Leipsic.

June 6.

June 7.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

June 8.

¹ Lond. 64,
66. Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
61, 62.

95.
Operations
against
Hamburg
by the
French.

May 6.

Allied force had come up. Just as they were entering into action, and the united force was advancing to complete their victory, news arrived of the armistice, which, after an examination of the documents produced by Arrighi, proved to be correct. Thus the Russian generals were robbed of their well-earned success, and obliged to content themselves with the six hundred prisoners they had already taken. About the same time, Captain Colon, a Prussian partisan, who had remained in Saxony after the grand Allied army retreated, incessantly annoying the enemy in the remote parts of Saxony and Franconia, having heard of the expected arrival of twenty pieces of cannon, and a large train of ammunition-waggons on the road between Hoff and Leipsic, formed an ambuscade, and attacked the enemy with such success that the whole artillery was destroyed, and the ammunition blown up. Colon was afterwards joined by Major Lutzow, with six hundred horse and a great number of partisans; and their united force having established themselves in the mountains of Vogtland, maintained a harassing and successful warfare, which was only terminated by the suspension of hostilities.¹

While the operations of the Allies on the rear of the French in Saxony were thus far successful, and were exposing the enemy to losses, almost daily, even greater than those which had proved so fatal to their arms in the preceding autumn, when they lay at Moscow, a very considerable calamity was experienced, and a loss, attended with unbounded private suffering, undergone on the Lower Elbe. The battle of Lützen, and withdrawal of the Allied armies to the right bank of the Elbe, exercised an immediate and fatal influence on the situation of Hamburg. Tettenborn, Dornberg, and all the partisan corps on the left bank of the river, shortly after fell back to that city itself. Vandamme, acting under the orders of Davoust, soon appeared before the town, on the left bank; and several gallant attacks of the Russian generals

on his forces led only to the capture of the island of Wilhelmsburg, in the Elbe, not far distant from Hamburg. The French besieging force, however, was soon increased to ten thousand men; and with this array, which was double the strength of the whole regular force to which he was opposed, Vandamme carried the island of Wilhelmsburg, and all the islands of the river opposite to the city, which put him in a situation to commence a bombardment.¹

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

May 19.
1 Vict. et
Cong. xxii.
63, 64. Lond.
62, 64.

This was, in consequence, begun the very next day. The dubious conduct of the Danish gunboats in the river for a few days suspended the fate of this unhappy city: but the court of Copenhagen having at length taken a decided part, and joined the French Emperor, the Russian generals were unable to withstand the united forces of both, and reluctantly compelled to intimate to the Hamburg authorities that they must depend on their own resources. With speechless grief the patriotic citizens learned that they were to be delivered over to their merciless enemies; but the necessities of the case admitted of no alternative, and on the 30th, General Tettenborn evacuated the city, which was next day occupied by the enemy, the French entering by one gate and the Danes by the other. The French general immediately levied a contribution of four million marks (£250,000) on the city, which was rigidly exacted. Without doubt, the acquisition of this great and opulent commercial emporium, commanding the mouth of the Elbe, and hermetically sealing it against the enemy, was a great advantage to Napoleon, and well calculated to revive the terror of his arms in the north of Germany. Yet so oppressive was the use which he made of his victory, and so unbounded the exasperation excited by the endless exactions to which the unfortunate Hamburgers were subjected, that it may be doubted whether he did not, in the end, lose more by this moral reaction, than by all the material resources placed at his command.²

96.
Capture of
that city by
Vandamme.
May 30.² Lond. 62,
63. Vict. et
Cong. xxii.
63, 64. Year
of Libera-
tion, i. 201,
261.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

97.

Progress to-
wards the
adjustment
of an armis-
tice.

May 18.

¹ *Ante*, ch.
lxxv. § 56.

May 19.

May 22.

May 25.

May 29.

When both parties had such need of a respite in military efforts to complete their preparations, and draw closer the diplomatic ties which connected, or were about to connect them with the states from which they respectively hoped for succour, there was little difficulty in coming to an accommodation for an armistice. The first overture for such a measure came from Napoleon, who on the 18th May, when setting out from Dresden for the army, had, as already mentioned,¹ despatched a proposal, nominally for an armistice, but really designed to detach Russia from the coalition, and lead the Emperor Alexander into separate negotiations with himself. This letter arrived at the Allied headquarters on the eve of the battle of Bautzen; and though it was received and considered in full council, in presence of the Austrian minister Count Stadion, and the answer determined on, yet it was deemed expedient to delay the messenger bearing the answer till the issue of arms had been tried. The result of that experiment, however, by demonstrating the vital importance to the Allies of gaining time for their great reinforcements to come up, and their present inability to cope with Napoleon, rendered them more tractable. The messenger was accordingly despatched with the answer from Stadion, bearing that "the Allied sovereigns were prepared to enter into the views of the Emperor Napoleon; too happy if these first overtures on his part should be followed by others leading to an object which his august master, the Emperor of Austria, had so much at heart." Napoleon, however, who above all things desired to open a separate negotiation with the Emperor Alexander, and was not without hopes, if it were agreed to, of regaining the ascendancy of Tilsit and Erfurth, again, three days afterwards, despatched a letter requesting a personal interview with that monarch. But this proposal, like the former one, was eluded by an answer, that it was intended that Count Schoumouloff, on the part of Russia, should repair to the French

advanced posts, which would save his imperial majesty the trouble of a journey for that purpose. Finding, therefore, that he could not succeed in this object of a separate negotiation, and feeling the necessity of yielding to the strongly expressed wishes of Austria for a general conference, Napoleon returned an answer that he agreed to the armistice: and the village of Pleswitz or Poischwitz, in the circle of Striegau, was declared neuter, for the purpose of carrying the requisite arrangements into effect.¹

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Fain, i.
400. Napo-
leon to
Caulain-
court, May
18, 1813.
Hard, xii.
161, 167.
Schoell, x.
224, 225.

Even after this preliminary and important point had been agreed to, it was no easy matter to bring the opposite views of parties regarding an armistice to a definite bearing. The times were widely changed from those when Napoleon, after launching forth the thunderbolts of Marengo, Austerlitz, or Friedland, dictated the terms to the vanquished on which he was willing to admit of a cessation of hostilities. He had gained, indeed, two great battles, and Europe again beheld the Allied armies receding before him. They retired, however, unbroken and undisgraced; no dislocation of masses, or cutting off of columns, had followed his victories; no troops of captives, or files of cannon, had graced his triumphs. The want of cavalry had marred his success, and rendered many of his best-conceived enterprises abortive; the superiority of the enemy in light troops had frequently converted incipient triumph into ultimate disaster. Above all, the fascination of his name on other nations was at an end. Europe no longer waited, in breathless anxiety, to receive his mandates. Austria, dark and ambiguous, was gradually rising from the attitude of a mediator into that of a commander. But the necessities of the Allies were at least as great. Their reinforcements were still far distant; the victorious French legions pressed on their rear; the march to Schweidnitz had abandoned their great line of communication with their own resources; and though they had reason to

98.
Difficulty in
arranging
the armis-
tice, as to
the line of
demarka-
tion.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

¹ Hard. xii.
164, 169.
Schoell, x.
225. Fain,
i. 436, 446,
448.

believe that Austria would join them, if Napoleon refused to make peace on reasonable terms, yet six weeks, at least, were required to enable her to complete her preparations. Both parties thus felt the necessity of a respite ; but neither was sufficiently humbled to evince, by their conduct, their sense of this necessity ; and this circumstance had wellnigh proved fatal to the negotiations.¹

99.
The line of
demarcation
is at length
fixed on.

Napoleon at first insisted on the line of the Oder as that of demarcation between the two armies ; but to this the Allies positively refused to agree : and the fall of Breslau, the capital of Silesia, which was occupied by the French army, without resistance, on the 30th May, rendered it less important for Napoleon to insist on that limit. At the same time, intelligence was received of the capture of Hamburg by the united armies of Denmark and France. He ceased to contend, therefore, for the line of the Oder, took his stand on the principle of *uti possidetis*, and insisted that his troops should retain the ground which they actually occupied. This basis was contended for so strenuously by his plenipotentiaries, that it had nearly broken off the negotiation ; for the Russian and Prussian ministers were not less resolute that the whole of Silesia should be abandoned. The commissioners on both sides, unable to come to an agreement, had separated, and hostilities were on the point of being resumed, when the firmness of Napoleon, for the first time in his life, yielded in negotiation ; and he agreed to such an abatement in his demands as rendered an accommodation practicable. He brought himself to abandon Breslau, to relinquish the line of the Oder, and to draw back his army to Liegnitz. Conferences were resumed at Pleswitz ; and on the 4th June, an armistice for six weeks was signed at that place between all the contending powers.²

² Fain, i.
449, 451.
Hard. xii.
168, 173.
Schoell, x.
226. Mar-
tens, Re-
cueil, xii.
582.

By this convention the line of demarcation between the hostile armies was fixed as follows :—Poischwitz, Lieg-

nitz, Goldberg, and Lahn, remained in the hands of the French; Landshut, Rudelstadt, Bolkenhagen, Striegau, and Canth, were restored to, or continued to be possessed by the Allies. All the intermediate territory, including the fortress of Breslau, was declared neutral, and to be occupied by neither army. From the confluence of the Katzbach and Oder, the line of demarcation followed that river to the frontiers of Saxony and Prussia, and thence to the Elbe, which formed its course to its mouth. If Hamburg was only besieged, not yet taken, it was to be treated as one of the blockaded towns; Dantzic, Modlin, Zamosc, Stettin, and Cüstrin were to be revictualled, under the direction of commissioners employed on both sides, every five days; Magdeburg, and the fortresses on the Elbe, to enjoy a circle of a league in every direction, which was to be considered as neutral. The duration of the armistice was to be six weeks from its signature, or till the 28th July; and six days' notification of the intention to break it was to be given by either party. This convention was concluded solely by the superior authority of the Allied monarchs; for their plenipotentiaries, irritated at the continued hostilities of the French troops, were on the point of breaking off the conferences, when they were overruled, and the signature ordered by their sovereigns' express directions.¹

One deplorable engagement took place after the signature of the armistice was known, which Europe has had much cause to lament, and of which France has too much reason to be ashamed. Under pretence that the armistice applied to the regular troops, but not to the irregular bands who had crossed the Elbe, a considerable time after the armistice was known on both sides, and when Lutzow's corps, five hundred strong, was returning to Silesia, they were attacked by three thousand men under General Fournier, when totally unprepared, relying on the faith of the treaty, at Ketzig, near Zeitz in Saxony, and in great part cut to pieces or taken. Among the

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

100.

Terms of the
armistice.
June 4.

¹ Martens, xii. 582.
Schoell, x. 227, 229.
Fain, i. 488.

101.
Perfidious
attack on
Lutzow's
corps, and
wound of
Körner.
June 14.

CHAP.
LXXXV.

1813.

wounded was the poet Körner, whose patriotic strains had rung like a trumpet to the heart of Germany, and who advanced to parley with the French general, along with Lutzow, before the attack commenced, and assure them that they were relying on the faith of the armistice. But the perfidious barbarian leader exclaiming, "The armistice is for all the world except you!" cut him down before he had even time to draw his sword. Körner's friends, by whom he was extremely beloved, instantly rushed in and rescued him and Lutzow from the hands of the enemy; and the poet was raised from the ground, weltering in his blood, and removed to a neighbouring wood, from whence he was conveyed to a peasant's cottage, and ultimately taken in secrecy to Dr Windler's house in Leipsic, who, with generous devotion, received the sufferer under his roof at the hazard of his own life. Körner recovered from the wound, but his immortal spirit quitted its worldly mansion on the 26th August 1813, when bravely combating the French army under the walls of Dresden. Such was the indignation excited by this treacherous act in Leipsic, that it was only by the presence of a very large French garrison that the people were prevented from breaking out into open insurrection. And though policy compelled the Allied sovereigns at the time to suppress their resentment, and not avail themselves of the just cause thus afforded for breaking off the armistice, yet it sank deep into the heart of Germany, and increased, if possible, the universal horror at French domination, which so soon led to its total overthrow. "Armistice be it," was the universal cry: "but no peace: revenge for Körner first."¹

¹ Deutsche Pandora, Von Friedrich Kollé, Erlebtes von Jahr 1813, 413. Biog. Univ. Sup. Voce Körner.

102.
Great talent displayed by Napoleon in this campaign.

No period in the career of Napoleon is more characteristic of the indomitable firmness of his character, as well as the resources of his mind, than that the history of which has now been narrated. When the magnitude of the disasters in Russia is taken into consideration, and the general defection of the north of Germany which immediately and

necessarily followed, it is difficult to say which is most worthy of admiration—the moral courage of the Emperor, whom such an unheard-of catastrophe could not subdue, or the extraordinary energy which enabled him to rise superior to it, and for a brief season chain victory again to his standards. The military ability with which he combated at Lützen—with infantry superior in number, indeed, but destitute of the cavalry which was so formidable in his opponents' ranks, and the infantry for the most part but newly raised—the victorious veteran armies of Russia, and ardent volunteers of Prussia, was never surpassed. The battle of Bautzen, in the skill with which it was conceived, and the admirable precision with which the different corps and reserves were brought into action, each at the appropriate time, is worthy of being placed beside Austerlitz or Jena. If it was less decisive in its results than those immortal triumphs, and partook more of the character of a drawn battle than a decisive victory, it was from no inferiority on his part in conception or combination; but because the Allies, animated by a higher spirit, taught by past misfortunes, and invigorated by recent success, now opposed a far more obstinate resistance to his attacks; and the want of cavalry rendered him unable, as he was wont, to follow up European tactics and discipline with the fell sweep of Asiatic horse. Nor should due praise be withheld from the energy and patriotic spirit of France, which, unbroken by a calamity unparalleled in past history, again sent forth its conquering legions into the heart of Germany, and reappeared with two hundred thousand victorious conscripts on the Elbe, within a few months after five hundred thousand veterans had died, or been captured, on the plains of Russia.

The armistice of Pleswitz or Poischwitz has been pronounced, by no mean authority, the greatest political fault of Napoleon's life.¹ By consenting to it, in the circumstances in which he was then placed, he openly

¹ *Jom. iv.*
314.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

103.

Ruinous
effects of
the armis-
tice on the
fortunes of
Napoleon.

yielded to the influence of Austria ; inspired her with a sense of her importance which she had not previously possessed ; accelerated rather than retarded the period of her declaration against him ; and lost the only opportunity which fortune afforded him, after the catastrophe of Moscow, of re-establishing his affairs. It is more than probable, that, if he had pursued a bolder course, refused to treat at all with the Allies at that period, directed the weight of his forces on the Oder towards Glogau, so as to cut them off from their base and reinforcements, and thrown them back, destitute of everything, on the Bohemian mountains, he would have succeeded in intimidating the cabinet of Vienna, and inducing it, if not to join his ranks, at least to observe real neutrality. It is difficult to see in such a case how the Allied armies, cut off from their own resources, and driven up against a foreign frontier, could have avoided, if Austria really continued neutral, a disgraceful capitulation and humiliating peace.

104.

Singular
manner in
which it
arose out of
the Austrian
alliance.

Even if Austria, linked to their fortunes, as perhaps she was, by secret treaties, had admitted the Allies within her dominions, and openly espoused their cause, she would have done so to much less advantage than she afterwards did at the expiration of the armistice. It is one thing to join the fortunes of a defeated and dejected, it is another, and a very different thing, to adhere to the banners of a recruited and reanimated host. Her own preparations were then incomplete : her army was not prepared to take the field, and that of the Allies was unable singly to maintain its ground. Whereas, if hostilities were to be resumed after the armistice had expired, it might easily have been foreseen—what actually occurred—that the Allied forces, acting in the midst of an enthusiastic and numerous population, would be recruited in a proportion twofold greater than the French, and the apprehensions of Austria allayed by the vast accession of strength arrayed round the banners of Russia and Prussia. In agreeing to an

armistice, by which he lost ground and gained nothing, under such circumstances, Napoleon was evidently actuated by a desire to propitiate the cabinet of Vienna, upon whose secret good-will he conceived himself, not without reason, since his marriage, entitled to rely. But nevertheless it reft from him the whole fruits of the victories of Lützen and Bautzen, and brought upon him the disasters of the Katzbach and Leipsic—a striking proof of the truth of what he afterwards so often asserted, that that apparently brilliant alliance, by causing him to adventure upon an abyss strewed with flowers, proved his ruin ; and of the mysterious manner in which due retribution is often, by Supreme direction, provided in this world for the career of iniquity, even in the unforeseen consequences of the very circumstances which appeared, at first sight, most effectually to secure its triumph.

The resurrection of Germany at this period, to throw off the oppression of French domination, is the most glorious and animating spectacle recorded in history. Not less heart-stirring in its spirit, not less entrancing in its progress, than the immortal annals of ancient patriotism, it was spread over a larger surface, and fraught with more momentous results. Wider civilisation had extended the interests of the contest ; a broader basis of freedom had swelled the ranks of patriotism ; a purer religion had sanctified the spirit of the victor. No trains of captives attended his steps ; no sacked cities were the monuments of his ferocity ; no pyramids of heads marked where his sabre had been. Nations, not citizens, now rose up for their deliverance ; continents, not empires, were at stake on the battle ; the world, not the shores of the Mediterranean, was the spectator of the struggle. Freedom inspired the arm of the patriot in the modern as in the ancient strife ; but the Cross, not the Eagle, was now to be seen upon its banners, and the spirit of Christianity at once animated the resistance of the soldier, and stayed the vengeance of the conqueror.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

105.
Sublime
spectacle
exhibited
by Germany
at this pe-
riod.

CHAP.
LXXV.

1813.

106.

Its elevated
moral spirit.

The efforts of France in 1793 were inspired by equal intrepidity, and followed for long by equal triumphs ; but the intermixture of worldly motives sullied the purity of the strife. The want of religion let loose the passions of vice. The lust of conquest, the selfishness of cupidity, were mingled with the ardour of patriotism ; and the triumphs of the empire terminated in the ordinary atrocities of massacre, extortion, and devastation. Very different was the spectacle which the efforts of combined Europe now presented. The devotion of the citizen was sustained by the constancy of the martyr ; the valour of the soldier ennobled by the purity of the patriot ; the ardour of the victor restrained by the sanctity of his cause. And the result proved the difference between the influence of worldly ambition and the obligation of religious duty. No massacre of Mytilene disgraced the laurels of the modern Salamis ; no flames of Carthage drew tears from the modern Scipio ; the smiling village and the protected fields were to be seen alike in the rear as in the front of the German host ; and Moscow burned was avenged by Paris saved.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

LIBERATION OF SPAIN—CAMPAIGN OF VITORIA.

MARCH—JULY, 1813.

THE strength of France, put forth with extraordinary and unheard-of vigour at the commencement of the Revolution, subsequently exhibited the languor incident to a weak and oppressive democratic government. It was again drawn out with unexampled ability by the powerful arm of Napoleon; and finally sank under the total exhaustion of the moral energies and physical resources of the country, from long-continued warfare. In the year 1793, twelve hundred thousand burning democrats ran to arms, impelled alike by political passion, external ambition, and internal starvation; and on the principle of making war maintain war, proceeded to regenerate, by revolutionising and plundering all mankind. In the year 1799, the vehemence of this burst had exhausted itself; the armies of the Republic, dwindled to less than two hundred thousand men, were no longer able to make head against their enemies; Italy, Germany, Switzerland, were lost; and on the Var, the Rhine, and the Limmat, its generals maintained a painful and almost hopeless defensive against superior forces. The extraordinary genius of Napoleon, by skilfully directing the whole talent and energy of France into the military profession, again brought back victory to the army of the Revolution, and carried the impe-

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

1.
Singular
progress in
the warlike
resources of
France dur-
ing the Re-
volution.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

2.
Limit im-
posed to its
progress
from the
moral laws
of nature.

rial standards in triumph to Cadiz, Vienna, and the Kremlin.

But there is a limit in human affairs to the strength of passion, however profoundly aroused, or the energy of wickedness, however skilfully directed. The period had now arrived when all the material resources of the Revolution were at once to fail, all its energies to be suddenly exhausted, when even the enormous conscription of eleven hundred thousand men in a single year was to fail in bringing any adequate accession of force to the Imperial standards. The time had now come when the external finances of the empire, deprived of the aid of foreign plunder, were to be involved in inextricable embarrassment : and its domestic resources, destitute of credit, and having exhausted every method of internal spoliation, were to become totally unproductive : when the confiscation of the property of the municipalities and the hospitals for the poor was to fail to afford any effective relief to a yawning exchequer ; and repeated levies, of three hundred thousand conscripts each, were to make little sensible addition to the strength of its armies ; when even the dreaded prospect of foreign subjugation was to prove inadequate to excite any general spirit of resistance in the country ; and the mighty conqueror, instead of sweeping over Europe at the head of five hundred thousand men, was to be reduced to a painful defensive with fifty thousand on the plains of Champagne.

3.
Contrast
which the
progress of
the efforts
of England
affords dur-
ing the same
period.

The history of Great Britain, and the successive development of its resources during the same period, exhibits a remarkable and memorable contrast to this downward progress. In the first instance, the forces which England put forth were singularly diminutive, and so obviously disproportioned to the contest in which she had engaged, as to excite at this time unbounded feelings of surprise. The revenue raised for 1793, the first year of the war, including the loan, was under twenty-five millions ; the

land forces only reached forty-six thousand men in Europe, and ten thousand in India ; the naval, eighty-five ships of the line in commission. Such was the impatience of taxation in a popular, and ignorance of war in an insular and commercial community, that with these diminutive forces, aided by a disjointed and jealous alliance, its rulers seriously expected to arrest the torrent of revolutionary ambition, supported by twelve hundred thousand men in arms. It is not surprising that disaster, long continued and general, attended such an attempt. But as the contest rolled on, England warmed in the fight. Repeated naval triumphs roused the latent thirst for glory in her people ; necessity made them submit without a murmur to increased expenditure ; and magnanimous constancy, amid a long succession of continental reverses, still, with mournful resolution, prolonged the contest.¹

At length the Spanish war gave her a fitting field for military exertion, and Wellington taught her rulers the principles of war, her people the path to victory. But even then, when her naval and military forces were every year progressively augmented, until they had reached a height unparalleled, when taken together, in any former age or country : when her fleets had obtained the undisputed dominion of the wave, and her land forces carried her standards in triumph to every quarter of the globe,—the magnitude of her resources, the justice of her rule, the industry of her people, enabled her to carry on the now gigantic contest without any recourse to revolutionary spoliation, or any infringement either on the credit of the state or the provision for its destitute inhabitants. Instead of declining as the contest advanced, her resources were found to multiply in an almost miraculous manner. Twenty years of warfare seemed only to have added to the facility with which she borrowed boundless sums, and the regularity with which she raised an unheard-of revenue ; while they tended to augment the fidelity with which she had performed her

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

¹ M'Culloch's Stat. of Great Britain, ii. 438. James's Nav. Hist. i. App. Table ii. Porter's Parl. Tables, i. 1.

4.
Vast exertions made at last by the British people.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

engagements to the public creditors, and the sacred regard which she paid alike to the Sinking Fund, the sheet-anchor of future generations, and the poor-rate, the refuge of the present.

5.
Astonishing
magnitude
of their
forces at
the close of
the war.

It will not be considered by subsequent times the least marvellous circumstance in that age of wonders, that in the year 1813, in the twentieth year of the war, the British empire raised, by direct taxation, no less than twenty, by indirect, forty-eight millions sterling; that she borrowed thirty-nine millions for the current expenses of the year, at a rate of less than five and a half per cent, and expended a hundred and seven millions on the public service: that she had eight hundred thousand men in arms in Europe, and two hundred thousand in Asia, all raised by voluntary enlistment; that her navy numbered two hundred and forty ships of the line, of which one hundred and four were actually in commission; that she carried on war successfully in every quarter of the globe, and sent Wellington into France at the head of a hundred thousand combatants, while her subsidies to foreign powers exceeded the immense sum of eleven millions sterling; and that, during all this gigantic expenditure, she preserved inviolate a Sinking Fund of above fifteen millions sterling, and assessed herself annually to the amount of more than six millions for the support of the poor.¹

¹ See Porter's Prog. of Nation, 182, and ii. 290. Ann. Reg. 1813, 206, and Porter's Parl. Tables, i. 1.

6.
Difference
in the re-
sources of
the two
countries.

Surprising as the contrast between the opposite progress of France and England, in finances, expenditure, and national resources, during the same contest, undoubtedly is; and memorable as is the proof it affords of the difference between the ultimate resources of a revolutionary, and those of a free, but stable, community, it becomes still more remarkable when the difference in the material resources with which they severally commenced the contest is taken into consideration. France, at the commencement of the Revolution, had a population of somewhat less than twenty-six millions, a revenue of

twenty-one millions sterling, and a debt of two hundred and forty millions ; and Great Britain, including Ireland, had a population, at the same period, of not more than fifteen millions, her total revenue was under seventeen millions, and her debt was no less than two hundred and thirty-three millions. While, therefore, the national burdens of the two countries were about the same, the physical and pecuniary resources of France were greater, the former by eighty, the latter by about thirty per cent, than those of the British empire. And although, without doubt, England possessed vast resources from her immense commerce and her great colonial possessions, yet in these respects, too, France was far from deficient. Her navy at that period numbered eighty-two ships of the line and seventy-seven frigates, a force greater than that which now bears the royal flag of England : and it had, in the American war, combated on equal terms with the British fleet. Her mercantile vessels were very considerable, those engaged in the West India trade alone being above sixteen hundred, and employing twenty-seven thousand sailors ; while her magnificent colony of St Domingo* of itself raised a greater quantity of colonial produce than the whole British West India islands, and took off manufactures to the extent of four millions sterling yearly from the parent state.

“ When a native of Louisiana,” says Montesquieu, “ wishes to obtain the fruit of a tree, he lays the axe to its root—Behold the emblem of despotism.” It is in this striking remark that the explanation is to be found of the extraordinary difference between the progress in the national resources, during the contest, of two states which began with advantages preponderating in favour

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

7.
Causes of
this extra-
ordinary
difference.

* It produced no less than £18,400,000 worth of sugar and other produce, including the Spanish portion : the whole British islands at this time do not produce so much. In 1832, prior to the late disastrous changes in these islands, the value of their annual produce was about £22,000,000 ; now, 1839, it is reduced to less than £17,000,000.—*Ante*, Chap. XXXVI. § 4 ; and PORTER'S *Parl. Tables*, i. 64.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

of the one which was ultimately exhausted in the strife. Democratic despotism, the most severe and wasting of all the scourges which the justice or mercy of heaven lets loose upon guilty man, had laid the axe to the root of French internal prosperity, and forced her people, by absolute necessity, into the career of foreign conquest. Even before the war commenced with the British empire, spoliation had extinguished capital; the assignats had annihilated credit, confiscation ruined landed property, general distress destroyed industrial wealth. Judging from past experience, the British government not unnaturally imagined, that a nation in such a state of general insolvency would have been unable to maintain the contest for any considerable time. And this, doubtless, would have been the case, if it had depended on its own resources alone for the means of carrying it on. But they did not anticipate, what experience so soon and fearfully demonstrated, the energy and almost demoniac strength which a nation, possessing a numerous and warlike population, can in such desperate circumstances acquire, by throwing itself in desolating hordes upon the resources of its enemies, after its own have been destroyed.

8.
The universal
spoliation of the
French system
of war.

It was this withering grasp which the French Revolution laid first upon the whole property of its own people, and then upon that of its opponents, which constituted, from first to last, the real secret of its success. The energy which it so long developed was no other than the passions of sin, turned into this new and alluring channel. But despotic spoliation, whether at home or abroad, is still laying the axe to the root of the tree which bears the fruits of industry; and no different result can be expected, in the long run, from the one than from the other. The exhaustion of the French empire, in 1814, when it had drained away the resources and exasperated the hearts of all Europe, was as complete as that of the Republic of France had been in 1795, when it had effected the destruction of property of every description within its own bounds.

Whereas in England, where the rights of all classes during the whole strife were religiously respected, and the hand of the spoiler was withheld alike from the mite of the widow and the palace of the peer, the resources provided for the strife, though infinitely less considerable in the outset, were far more durable in the end. Instead of declining and withering up as the contest rolled on, they daily became greater and greater with the growth of the protected industry of her people; until they acquired a decisive preponderance over the gains of violence, and arrayed Europe in dense and enthusiastic battalions, to assert the triumph of the rule of justice over that of iniquity.

The dreadful catastrophe of the Moscow campaign, the animating prospect which the resurrection of Germany afforded, the glorious successes which the campaign of Salamanca had achieved, totally extinguished the division of opinion and silenced the voice of faction in Great Britain. All parties, though from different motives, concurred in advocating the necessity of prosecuting the war with the utmost vigour. The Whigs saw in such a system the fairest and now the only prospect of attaining the object which they had uniformly desired—the general pacification of the world. The Tories supported it from a conviction that one vigorous effort would now put a period to the sacrifices of the nation, and give a durable ascendancy to the conservative principles for which they had so long and strenuously contended. Thus both parties, though with different objects, now combined in recommending the utmost vigour in the prosecution of hostilities. And what is very remarkable, and perhaps unprecedented in British history, the chief complaint made against government by the leaders of the popular party now was, that they had yielded *too much* to the advice which they themselves had so long and eloquently tendered, and had not prosecuted the war with the vigour which the favourable circumstances that had occurred so imperatively required.¹

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

9.
General
unanimity
in Great
Britain as
to the pro-
secution of
the war.

¹ Ann. Reg.
1813, 98,
209.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

10.

Argument
of the Op-
position
against the
conduct of
the Spanish
war.

On the part of the Opposition, it was contended by Marquis Wellesley and Earl Grey, "What secret cause, amidst the splendid scene which has been exhibited in the Peninsula, what malign influence amidst the rejoicings and acclamations of triumph, has counteracted the brilliant successes of our arms, and has converted the glad feelings of a just exultation into the bitterness of regret and disappointment? With an army in discipline and spirit superior to any that had ever before been assembled; uniting in itself qualities so various as to have never entered into the assemblage of any other species of force; with a general pronounced by the whole world to be unsurpassed in ancient or modern times—the pride of his country, the hope and refuge of Europe; with a cause in which justice vied with policy, combining all that was ardent in the one motive, with all that was sober in the other; with the admiration of the world excited by our achievements:—how is it that they have terminated only in disappointment; that a system of advance has suddenly and inevitably been converted into a system of retreat; and that the great conqueror who chased the French armies from the plains of Salamanca has been pursued in his turn over those very plains, the scene of his triumph and his glory, to take refuge in the very positions which he held before the campaign commenced?

11.

Compara-
tive advan-
tages of the
French and
British posi-
tions in
Spain.

"The advantages of our situation in the Peninsula, during the last campaign, were very great, and totally different from what they had been at any previous period. The reduction of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz weakened in a great degree the enemy's frontier lines; and this advantage was accompanied by a most extraordinary and unlooked-for failure in the means, and relaxation of the exertions, of the French in the Peninsula. The efforts of the French army were deprived of the unity of counsel, of design, and of action; distraction reigned among the generals; the efforts of their armies were wholly different from those which we have witnessed when the soul which

inspired them was present, infusing its own vigour into every operation. The central government at Madrid was miserable beyond description. Without power to enforce obedience, without talents to create respect, or authority to secure compliance, it was at the mercy of rival and independent generals; each solicitous only for his own fame or aggrandisement, and little disposed to second the others in any operations for the public good. Here, then, was a most astonishing combination of favourable circumstances; and yet we have derived no greater benefit from them than we did from previous campaigns, when everything was of the most adverse character.

“To take advantage of these favourable contingencies, we should clearly have augmented our force in Spain to such an amount as would have enabled its general at once to have in the field one force adequate to check the main body of the French army, and another to carry on active operations. Unless you did so, you necessarily exposed your cause to disaster; because the enemy, by relinquishing minor objects, and concentrating his forces against your one considerable army, could easily, being superior on the whole, be enabled in the end to overwhelm and crush it. Hill never had more than five thousand British, and twelve thousand Portuguese and Spaniards; yet, with this handful of men, he kept in check all the disposable troops of Soult in Estremadura—a clear proof of the vast benefit which would have arisen to the Allied cause if an adequate force of perhaps double or triple the amount had been similarly employed. Now, what period could have been desired so suitable for making such an effort, as that when the central government at Madrid was imbecile and nugatory, the French armies separated and disunited, Napoleon thoroughly engrossed with his all-absorbing expedition to Russia, and the British army in possession of a central position on the flank of the theatre of war, which at once menaced hostility and defied attack?

CHAP.
LXXXVI.

1813.

12.
Inadequacy
of Wellington's force.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

13.

The whole
successes
attributable
to Wellington
and his
soldiers.

“ The successes which have been gained throughout the whole campaign—and they have been not only brilliant, but in some degree lasting—were entirely owing to the skill of the general and the valour of his troops, and in no degree to the arrangement or combination at home on the part of those who had the direction of military affairs. Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz were both carried with means scandalously inadequate, by intrepid daring on the part of the general, and the shedding of torrents of English blood. After the reduction of the last of these fortresses, what was the policy which obviously was suggested to the British general? Evidently to have pursued his advantage in the south, attacked Soult in Andalusia, destroyed his great military establishments in that province, and again brought Spain into active hostility, by rescuing from the grasp of the enemy its richest and most important provinces. He was prevented from doing this, to which his interest and inclination equally pointed, by the necessity of returning to the north to check the incursion of Marmont into Beira, and by the notoriously unprovided state of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz to withstand a siege. With whom did the blame of not providing adequate means for the protection of the north, when the career of victory was pursued in the south, rest? Evidently with the government at home, which both neglected to send out the requisite supplies, and never maintained the British force in the field at more than half the amount which their ample resources, both military and pecuniary, could have afforded.

14.
Defective
combina-
tions of
the govern-
ment.

“ When the invasion of Leon was commenced in July, and the whole disposable British force was perilled on a single throw, the defects in the combinations, and languor on the part of government, were still more conspicuous. That irruption, attempted by forty-five thousand men into a country occupied by two hundred and fifty thousand, could be based only on the prospect of powerful co-operation in other quarters. Was any such afforded?

Murray's descent on the eastern coast, with the Anglo-Sicilian expedition, was mainly relied on ; but did it arrive in time to take any part of the pressure off Wellington ? So far from it, though the whole arrangements for the sailing of the expedition were concluded as early as March, yet on the 15th July he had heard nothing of its movements ; and he was compelled to begin a systematic retreat—in the course of which he gained, indeed, by his own skill, a most splendid victory—but which, leading, as it did, to a concentration of the enemy's troops from all parts of the Peninsula, involved him in fresh difficulties, where the incapacity of ministers was, if possible, still more conspicuous. No sufficient efforts were made to provide the general with specie, and all his operations were cramped by the want of that necessary sinew of war. No adequate train of artillery was provided for the siege of Burgos ; no means of resisting the concentration of troops from all parts of the Peninsula were afforded to him ; and he was ultimately compelled, after the most glorious efforts, to relinquish all his conquests, except the two fortresses first gained, and again to take refuge within the Portuguese frontier.

“ So nicely balanced were the forces of the contending parties during this memorable campaign, that there is no stage of it in which twelve thousand additional infantry and three thousand cavalry would not have insured decisive success. Now, was such a force at the disposal of government, in addition to those which were actually on service in the Peninsula ? The details of the war-office leave no room for doubt on this head. During the whole of last year there were in the British islands, exclusive of veteran and garrison corps, forty-five battalions of regular infantry, and sixteen regiments of cavalry, presenting a total of fifty-three thousand men ; besides seventy-seven thousand regular militia, two hundred thousand local militia, and sixty-eight thousand yeomanry cavalry. Can any one doubt that, out of this immense

CHAP.
LXXXVI.

1813.

15.
Inadequacy
of the rein-
forcements
sent to
Spain.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

force, lying dormant as it were within Great Britain and Ireland, at least twenty-five thousand efficient troops might have been forwarded to the Peninsula? And yet the whole number sent was only twenty-one thousand, of whom more than one-half were drafts and recruits, leaving only ten thousand five hundred and forty-five actually sent out of fresh regiments. Why was not this number doubled—why was it not trebled? Were we looking for a more favourable opportunity than when Napoleon was absent with half his military force in Russia? Did we wait for more glorious co-operation than was afforded us during the Moscow campaign? And what would have been the effect in France if, when the shattered remains of the Grand Army were arriving on the Elbe, Wellington, with one hundred thousand men, flushed with victory, had been thundering across the Pyrenees?”¹

¹ Parl. Deb.
xxv. 25, 26.

16.
Reply on
the part of
govern-
ment.

To these able arguments it was replied by Lord Bathurst, Lord Castlereagh, and Lord Liverpool:—"The confident tone assumed by the noble Marquis might induce the suspicion that his brother, the illustrious Wellington, shares his opinions, and is dissatisfied with the support which he received from government during the campaign. But the fact is otherwise, and he has voluntarily written to them expressing his entire satisfaction with their conduct in this particular. The objections made are mainly founded upon this: that we have not in the Peninsular contest employed our whole disposable force; that it might have been materially augmented without detriment to the home service. But it was not the policy of this country—it was not in itself expedient, to employ its whole force upon any one foreign service, how important soever; but rather to retain a considerable reserve at all times ready in the citadel of our strength, to send to any quarter whither it may appear capable of being directed to the greatest advantage. No one will dispute the importance of the Penin-

sular contest ; but can it be seriously maintained that it is in that quarter *alone* that the dawning of European freedom is to be looked for ? Is Russia nothing ? Is Prussia nothing ? And with the profound hatred which French domination has excited, in the north of Germany, is it expedient to put ourselves in a situation to be unable to render any assistance to insurrectionary movements in Hanover, Holland, or the north of Germany ; countries still nearer the heart of the enemy's power, and abounding with a more efficient warlike population than either Spain or Portugal ?

“ When it is stated, too, that the campaign terminated with the British armies in the same quarters which they held at its commencement ; this, though geographically true, is in a military and political point utterly erroneous. Was the reduction of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, the capture of the whole heavy artillery of the armies of Portugal and of the centre, at the former of these fortresses and the Retiro, nothing ? Is it no small matter to have loosened the spoiler's grasp over the whole of Spain ? to have compelled the evacuation of Andalusia and Granada, taken twenty thousand prisoners, and destroyed the great warlike establishments at Seville and before Cadiz, stored, as they were, with above a thousand pieces of cannon ? If the expedition of Soult to the south of the Sierra Morena, contrary as it was to all military principle, while the English power in Portugal remains unsubdued, was suggested by the desire to open up new and hitherto untouched fields of plunder ; the loss of these provinces, the throwing back the enemy for his whole support on the central provinces of Spain, wasted as these were by his former devastation, was a proportional disadvantage to his cause, a proportional benefit to the Allied operations. How many campaigns in English history will bear a comparison, not merely in brilliant actions, but in solid and durable results, with that of Salamanca ? And it is, perhaps, not the least

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

17.
Great
amount
of the suc-
cesses which
had been
gained.

CHAP.
LXXXVI.

1813.

18.
Defence of
the general
military
measures
of the gov-
ernment.

proof of its vast moral influence, that it has wrought an entire change in the views of the gentlemen opposite ; and, for the first time in the history of the war, made the burden of their complaint, not, as heretofore, that too much, but that *too little* has been done by British co-operation for the deliverance of Europe.

“ The expected co-operation of Lord William Bentinck from Sicily, certainly, did not arrive at the time that was calculated upon. But the fault there lay not with government, but in circumstances which prevented that officer from exercising in due time the discretion with which he was timeously invested, as to appearing with a powerful British force on the east of Spain in the beginning of July. The failure of the attack on Burgos, however much to be regretted, was neither to be ascribed to negligence on the part of government in forwarding the necessary stores, nor to want of foresight on the part of Lord Wellington in the preparations for its reduction, but to the accidental circumstance of its having been, unknown to the English general, strengthened to such a degree as to render it impregnable with the means which he deemed amply sufficient for its capture. He never asked for a battering train, because he never thought it would be required. If he had done so, he could at once have got any amount of heavy guns he required from the ships of war at Santander. Even as it was, the fort would have been taken but for the accidental death of the officer who headed the assault on the 22d September, and the still more unfortunate circumstance of his having had upon his person a plan of the siege, so that the whole designs of the British engineers became known to the enemy. The complaints made of the want of specie at Lord Wellington’s headquarters are sufficiently answered by the fact, that such was the state of the exchanges from the extraordinary demand for specie on the Continent, that we lost twenty-four per cent upon all remittances to the Peninsula, which, upon the

£15,000,000 that the campaign actually cost, occasioned a further loss of £3,000,000. But the effect of the last campaign is yet to be judged of; it is not in a single season that the French power in the Peninsula, the growth of five years of conquest, is to be uprooted. The blow delivered at Salamanca loosened their power over the whole realm: one is, perhaps, not far distant which may totally overthrow it.”¹

CHAP.
LXXVI.
1813.

¹ Parl. Deb.
xxv. 66, 74,
87.

Upon a division, Marquis Wellesley's motion for a committee of inquiry into the conduct of the war, was negatived by a majority of seventy-six—the numbers, including proxies, being one hundred and fifteen to thirty-nine.²

² Parl Deb.
88.

One good effect resulted from the able exposition made by Marquis Wellesley on this occasion, of the benefits which might be expected to result from the conducting of the war in Spain on a more extended scale, and in a manner worthy of the great nation which was engaged in the strife; viz. that government were induced to make the utmost efforts, both to augment the numbers and efficiency of the regular army at home, and to increase the reinforcements that were forwarded to Wellington in the Peninsula. For several years past, the system had been adopted of providing for the increase of the regular army, by permitting the privates of the militia to volunteer into the line, and offering them large bounties, amounting sometimes to twelve and fourteen guineas, to do so. By this means, the objectionable measure of a direct conscription was avoided, and recruits were obtained for the army of a better description than could otherwise be obtained by voluntary enlistment, and possessing the great advantage of being already thoroughly drilled and exercised. So efficacious was this system, that, joined to the warlike enthusiasm awakened by the victories in the Peninsula, it produced during this year twenty-five thousand men for the army; ³ a force which more than compensated the waste of the Spanish war, great as it was,

19.
Means
taken for
recruiting
the army.

³ Parl. Deb.
xxiv. 346,
876.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

20.
Vast military force
displayed
by Great
Britain
during this
year.

and which was nearly double the amount obtained by private enlistment, which had never reached fourteen thousand.

The military force maintained during this year by Great Britain was immense; and, coupled with the vast navy which it was necessary to keep on foot for the maritime war, in which America had now appeared as a principal enemy, presented perhaps the greatest aggregate of warlike strength ever put forth by any single nation since the beginning of the world. The land forces presented a total of two hundred and twenty-eight thousand regular troops, having increased during the year twelve thousand even after all the losses of the year 1812; besides twenty-eight thousand British soldiers in India, ninety-three thousand militia in the British islands, hardly inferior to the army of the line, and thirty-two thousand foreign troops in the British service. The sepoy force in India numbered fully two hundred thousand men, making in all a total of five hundred and eighty-two thousand soldiers in arms, all raised by voluntary enlistment, and exclusively devoted to the military life as a profession. In addition to this, the local militia, similar to the Prussian landwehr, in the British islands, amounted to no less than three hundred thousand; and the yeomanry cavalry, or landwehr horse, were sixty-eight thousand:—exhibiting a total of nine hundred and forty-nine thousand men in arms, of which seven hundred and forty-nine thousand were drawn from the population of the British islands.^{1*}

¹ Martin's
Colonial
Hist. i. 319.
Army Estimates for
1813. Parl.
Deb. xxiv.
346, 367.

21.
Great
amount of
the naval
force at that
period.

Immense as these forces are, the marvel that they should have reached such an amount is much increased, when we consider the magnitude of the naval establishment kept up in the same year, and the limited physical resources of the country which, at the close of a twenty years' war, made such prodigious efforts. The British

* See Appendix, A, Chap. LXXVI.

navy, at the commencement of 1813—and it was kept up at the same level during the whole year—amounted to two hundred and forty-four ships of the line, of which one hundred and two were in commission, and two hundred and nineteen frigates, besides smaller vessels; making in all, one thousand and nine ships in the service of England, of which six hundred and thirteen were in commission, and bore the royal flag! This immense force was manned by one hundred and forty thousand seamen, and eighteen thousand marines; making a total, with the land forces, of ELEVEN HUNDRED AND SEVEN THOUSAND MEN IN ARMS, all procured by voluntary enrolment, of whom above nine hundred thousand were drawn from the population of the British islands! When it is recollected that this prodigious armament was raised in an empire in Europe, not at that period numbering much above eighteen millions of souls over its whole extent,*—that is, considerably less than half the population of the French empire, which had a population of forty-two millions to work upon for its army of nine hundred thousand men, and hardly any naval force afloat to support, it must be admitted, that history has not preserved so memorable an instance of patriotic exertion.¹

But these efforts drew after them a proportional expenditure, and never at any former period had the annual charges of government in the British empire been so considerable. The army alone cost £19,000,000; its extraordinaries £9,000,000 more; the navy £20,000,000; the ordnance £3,000,000; and so lavish had the expenditure become, under the excitement and necessities of the war, that the unprovided expenditure of the year preceding amounted to no less than £4,662,000. But these charges,

CHAP.
LXXVI.
1813.

¹ James's
Hist. vi.
516, Table
ii.

22.
Prodigious
expenditure
of the year.

* Population of Great Britain in 1811,	.	.	12,552,044
Ireland, probably	.	.	5,000,000
Increase to 1813,	.	.	500,000
Total,	.	.	18,052,044

—*Parl. Deb.* xxi. 286. *Census Papers.*

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

great and unprecedented as they were, constituted but a part of the expenses of Great Britain during this memorable year. The war in Germany at the same time was sustained by her liberality; and the vast hosts which stemmed the torrent of conquest on the Elbe, and rolled it back at Leipsic, were armed, clothed, and arrayed, by the munificence of the British government, and the resources of the British people. Portugal received a loan of two millions sterling; Sicily four hundred thousand; Spain, in money and stores, two millions; Sweden a million; Russia and Prussia three millions; Austria one million; besides warlike stores sent to Germany, to the amount of two millions more. The war on the Continent, during this year, cost in all, in subsidies or furnishings to foreign powers, ten millions four hundred thousand pounds, of which Germany alone received above six millions; and yet so little was Great Britain exhausted by these immense exertions, that she was able at the same time to advance a loan of two millions sterling to the East India Company. The total expenditure of the year, including Ireland, and reckoning the current vote of credit, reached the amazing and unprecedented amount of ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN MILLIONS.¹*

¹ Lord Castlereagh's speech, Nov. 17, 1813. Parl. Deb. xxvii. 132, 146. Supplies for 1813. Ibid. xxvi. 577.

23.
Revenue raised, and loans contracted during the year.

It may naturally be asked how supplies so prodigious could by possibility be obtained during a single year, especially as the manufacturing industry of the country had for above two years been most seriously obstructed, and most grievous distress induced in many districts by the cessation of all mercantile connexion with America; first, from the Non-Intercourse Act, and next, from the open hostility of the United States. As the sum raised by taxation within the year amounted in all to £68,800,000, a very large loan became necessary; and such were the demands upon the exchequer that, after the sum had been borrowed which appeared adequate to

* See Appendix, B, Chap. LXXVI.

the whole probable necessities of the state in March, a further and very considerable addition to the national debt had become necessary in November. The loan at first contracted in March was £21,000,000 ; but even this ample supply proved insufficient, and parliament was assembled early in November to make a further addition to the means to be placed at the disposal of the chancellor of the exchequer. An additional loan of twenty-two millions was voted in that month, of which one half was devoted to the current expenses of the year, and one half to fund an equal amount of exchequer bills, the sum which had now become so considerable as to occasion a very serious pressure on the money market. To meet the interest and contribution to the Sinking Fund for these great loans, additional taxes, chiefly on tobacco, malt, and spirits, to the amount of £610,000 in Ireland, and spirits, sugar, and lesser articles in Great Britain, estimated to bring in £800,000, were imposed. But they were far from meeting the total interest on the sums and floating debt contracted, borrowed during the year. Yet so little were even these immense loans from affecting the public credit, or exhausting the pecuniary resources of Great Britain, that they seemed to have a directly contrary effect ; the resources of the empire rose up with the more buoyancy the greater the load which was imposed upon them. Decisive proof of this occurred in this year ; for while the loan contracted in spring was concluded at the rate of £5, 10s. 6d. per cent, that in November was obtained on the more favourable terms of £5, 6s. 2d. per cent ; and such was the competition of capitalists to obtain shares in the loan at this reduced rate, that not only were many disappointed who had come to bid, but the premium on it in the market next day rose three and a half per cent. The answer to all these questions—the solution of all these marvels—is to be found in the energy of the British people, which received full development in the protection of native industry at home and abroad ;¹ in the securing,

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

Nov. 15.

¹ Mr Vansittart's speech, June 11 and Nov. 15, 1813. Parl. Deb. xxvi. 578, 580, and xxvii. 107, 110.

CHAP.
LXXXVI.

1813.

24.
Glorious
position
which
Great
Britain
occupied
at this
period.

by the strong bond of interest, of colonial loyalty ; and in the establishment of a system of currency, in the heart of the empire, which was adequate to the wants of its numerous population, and sustained without crisis or vacillation throughout the whole contest the industry of its vast and varied dominions.

We have now reached the highest point in the military and national glory of Great Britain. Without having ever, in the course of this arduous contest, compromised her principles, or yielded to the enemy ; without having touched one shilling of the sacred fund set apart for the redemption of the public debt, or infringed either upon the security of property or the provision for the poor, she had attained her long-sought-for object, and not only provided for her own security by her valour, but delivered Europe by her example. In the eloquent words of Mr Canning, who, though in opposition to government since his rupture with Lord Castlereagh in 1809, still remained true to his principles,—“ What we have accomplished is, establishing the foundations upon which the temple of peace may be erected ; and imagination may now picture the completion of that structure, which, with hopes less sanguine, and hearts less high, it would have been folly to have attempted to raise. We may now confidently hope to arrive at the termination of labour, and the commencement of repose. It is impossible to look back to those periods when the enemy vaunted, and we perhaps feared, that we should have been compelled to sue for peace, without returning thanks, amidst all our ebullitions of joy, to that Providence which gave us courage and heart still to bear up against accumulating calamity. Peace is safe now, because it is not dictated : peace is safe now, for it is the fruit of exertion, the child of victory : peace is safe now, because it will not be purchased at the expense of the interest and the honour of the empire :¹ it is not the ransom to buy off danger, but

¹ Parl. Deb.
xxviii, 145.

the lovely fruit of the mighty means we have employed to drive danger from our shores."

But the firmness of the British rulers, at this eventful crisis, was not equal to the magnificent mission of the nation over which they presided. During the whole anxieties, perils, and burdens of the contest, the government of England, directed by noble hearts, upheld by heroic arms, had adhered with unshaken constancy to the system for the redemption of the public debt: not one shilling had been diverted from this sacred purpose during the darkest, the most distressed, or the most hopeless period of the contest. And the result had been, that the Sinking Fund—the sheet-anchor of the nation's credit—now exceeded fifteen millions sterling, having increased to that immense amount from one million in 1786, when it was first placed on an efficient footing by Mr Pitt.¹ Now, however, when the nation was about to reap the fruits of its heroic constancy; when the clouds which had so long obscured its course were dispersing, and the glorious dawn of peace and security was beginning to shine on the earth, the resolution of its rulers failed—the provident system of former days was abandoned. Duty was sacrificed to supposed expediency; the fatal precedent was introduced, of abandoning the preparation for the future for the relief of the present; and that vacillation appeared in our financial councils, which made it painfully evident that, with the dangers of the war, its heroic spirit was about to depart.

This great and momentous change in our financial policy, the effects of which have been felt with such severity in later times, was thus introduced by Mr Vansittart, on a day which deserves to be noted as among the most disastrous which England ever knew—March 3, 1813. "Towards the close of last session, in the discussions which took place on our financial situation, a general conviction seemed to prevail, that some measure of unusual severity had become necessary to take off the load which depressed

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

25.

Ruinous
change in-
troduced at
this period
into the
Finance
system of
Great Bri-
tain.

¹ *Ante*, ch.
xli. § 15,
note.

26.

Mr Vansit-
tart's new
plan of
finance, and
arguments
in support
of it.

March 3.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

public credit. Six months, however, have elapsed since that period—six months, the most momentous ever known in the history of Europe. The face of the world has been changed ; and from the conflict between insatiable, unprincipled, remorseless ambition on the one side, and hardy, stubborn, though untutored patriotism on the other, have resulted consequences the most important, and hopes the most satisfactory to the cause of humanity. That necessity no longer exists, and, in consequence, the time appears to have now arrived when, without impairing our public credit—without postponing the period when the entire liquidation of our public debt may with confidence be anticipated—the nation may safely obtain some relief from the unparalleled exertions which it has made.

“ It is by an alteration on the Sinking Fund, as it has been established by act of Parliament in 1802, that this relief, which is evidently necessary, is to be obtained. The great danger of the Sinking Fund, which has now become an engine of such vast power and efficacy in the state, is, *that it will soon come to reduce the debt too rapidly. If the contraction of loans ceases, it will, ere long, pay off twenty, thirty, nay, forty millions annually ;* and the reduction of these immense sums will not, as heretofore, be concealed or neutralised by the simultaneous contraction of debt to an equal or greater amount ; but it will appear at once by the diminution to that extent of the public funds every year. Extraordinary as these results may appear, they are indicated, by a rigid application to the future of the experience of the past, as certain to ensue—the only safe method of reasoning that can be practised in political affairs. The Sinking Fund has now reached an extent of which the history of no country affords an example. But can we contemplate without alarm the prospect of paying off thirty or forty millions annually for the next thirty years, and then suddenly ceasing, which will be the case under the law as it at present stands, in consequence of the whole debt hav-

27.
Alleged
danger
from the
Sinking
Fund ope-
rating too
quickly.

CHAP.
LXXVI.
1813.

ing been paid off? Such an event would produce effects upon the credit investments of the country, too formidable even for imagination to contemplate. All our financiers, accordingly, have concurred in the necessity of limiting, in some way or other, and at no remote period, this powerful agent of liquidation. By the original Sinking Fund Act of 1786, drawn by Mr Pitt, this limitation was to have taken place as soon as the fund should have accumulated to four millions *per annum*. Had not that original plan been varied by the act of 1802, the public would long ere this have felt relief from the operation of the Sinking Fund, though only to the limited extent of the interest on four millions a-year. Lord Lansdowne and all the authorities have also concurred in the opinion, that the idea of paying off thirty or forty millions a-year in time of peace, which the Sinking Fund, if maintained to its present amount, will unquestionably do, is altogether impracticable and visionary. Relief must, therefore, at some time or other be afforded to the public, by arresting the action of the Sinking Fund; and if so, the question occurs, is there any period when such relief is more loudly called for, more imperatively required, than at the present moment?

“When the Sinking Fund was established in 1786, the total amount of the debt was about £240,000,000; and the redemption of such a sum appeared, if not altogether hopeless, at least placed at a very remote distance. But, great as the difficulty then appeared, the firmness and perseverance of the nation, pursuing this important object with undeviating resolution, have at length completely surmounted it; and the accounts upon the table prove, that a sum equal to the total amount of the debt, as it existed in 1786, has already been redeemed.* Instead

28.
The past experience of its powers.

* Total national funded debt on 5th January 1786,	£238,231,248
Redeemed before March 1, 1813,	238,350,143

Overpaid as compared with original debt, £118,895

—MR VANSITTART'S *Resolutions*, March 3, 1813, *Parl. Deb.* xxiv. 1092.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

of shifting the burden from themselves, and laying it upon posterity, the people of this country have nobly and manfully supported the load, even under the burden of increasing difficulties, which the vicissitudes of the contest have thrown upon them ; and what is still more remarkable, they have done this during a period when they paid a still greater amount in war taxes, to prevent the growth of another debt of a similar amount during the contest. So that experience has both amply demonstrated the wonderful powers of the Sinking Fund in accumulating funds for the redemption of the debt, and the strong claims which the people of England now have for some relief from the burdens with which it is attended.

29,
Modifica-
tion of Mr
Pitt's
scheme
proposed.

“ Mr Pitt not only strongly supported, but was the original author of the Act of 1802 ; and his first design was, that after reserving as much of the Sinking Fund as would redeem the whole debt at par in forty-five years, the surplus, then amounting to above a million, should be applied to the public service. We have now arrived at the period when a similar relief, without impairing the ultimate efficiency of the Sinking Fund, may be obtained. It is proposed that the debt first contracted should be deemed to have been first discharged ; and that the Sinking Fund created in respect of any *subsequent* loan shall be first applied to the redemption of any prior loan remaining unredeemed ; while the operation of the percentage created for those earlier loans, shall be continued for the redemption of those subsequently contracted. Thus, in the event of a long war, a considerable resource might accrue during the course of the war itself, as every successive loan would contribute to accelerate the redemption of those previously existing ; and the total amount of charge to be borne by the public in respect of the public debt, will be reduced to a narrower compass than under the existing mode, while the period of the ultimate discharge of the whole debt will be accelerated rather than retarded. The calculations which are laid on the

table prove, that by the new plan means are provided for the total repayment of the existing debt from four to ten, and of the future debt from fourteen to twenty-seven years sooner than by the laws in force, while a very considerable surplus available to our present necessities will at once be obtained. According to the laws at present in force, the whole debt *will be discharged by the year* 1845, by the new plan in 1837.”¹

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

¹ Parl. Deb.
xxiv. 1078,
1095.

To these specious arguments, it was answered by Mr Huskisson and Mr Tierney—“The great and peculiar merit of Mr Pitt’s system of the Sinking Fund is, that it makes an effectual provision for the *permanent* liquidation, not only of the existing, but of every future public debt. He wished, in the event of any future war, to guard the country against the evils arising from too rapid an accumulation of debt, and consequent depression of credit ; and to place us beyond the reach of that hopelessness, despondency, and alarm, which had brought the finances of the country to the brink of ruin at the close of the American war. But his system has a still higher merit. He foresaw that the greatest difficulty which the statesmen of the country would have to contend with in subsequent periods of difficulty, would be to guard against the danger of future alienation. The plan which he introduced in 1792, was intended to provide for this specific danger ; and it held out to the public a guarantee, that any future debt which the state might incur, how great soever its amount, would be contracted under a system of redemption, which would inevitably provide for its extinction within a period of thirty years or so after its contraction. Under this admirable system, not only the Sinking Fund which it provides, but the application and accumulation of that Sinking Fund, are so interwoven and bound up with the contract for every loan, that its redemption became a condition between the borrower and lender, until the obligation of repayment was cancelled by the extinction of the debt itself. It was made an

30.
Argument
of Mr Hus-
kisson and
Mr Tierney
against the
new plan.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

¹ *Ante*, ch.
xii. §§ 11-
15.

objection to this system, that it would place the reimbursement of all future loans beyond the reach or control of parliament: but to every thoughtful observer, this very circumstance is its principal merit; for it placed the financial salvation of the country beyond the reach even of the future weakness of its rulers or people.¹

31.
Advantages
of Mr Pitt's
scheme.

“The fundamental position in Mr Pitt’s financial system, the value of which experience has so completely demonstrated, is, that provision should be made for every loan being redeemed from the resources provided at the time of its contraction, at latest within forty-five years. This is not founded upon any imaginary result or chimerical anticipation, but upon a rigorous application of arithmetical calculation, and is as certain as any proposition in geometry. He established a sinking fund of one per cent on each loan contracted, for which provision was made in the taxes laid on to pay its interest; and it was enacted that this one per cent should be regularly issued quarterly from the Exchequer, to be laid out in the purchase or redemption of stock, to be invested in the name of the commissioners of the national debt; and it is demonstrably certain that this system, supposing the rate of interest to be invariably three per cent, will redeem a capital equal to a hundred times its amount in little more than forty-five years. This is the fixed and certain rate of redemption at three per cent; that is, when the three per cent stock is at par: but it is a great and peculiar advantage of Mr Pitt’s system, that it is calculated to act more powerfully when the price of stock is depressed, by rendering the purchases of the commissioners cheaper; that is, it draws an additional element of life from the very calamities which appear to threaten the existence of the nation.

“The foundation of the new system of finance proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer is, that Parliament is at liberty, under the Act of 1792, to regulate and modify, according to its discretion, in any manner,

the redemption of the debt contracted under that act, provided the final liquidation of each of these separate loans, which together constitute the aggregate of the debt, is not protracted beyond the full period of forty-five years. Is such an alteration consistent with public faith? That there is nothing in the act authorising such an alteration in the means established for the creditor's security in the progressive liquidation of his debt, is quite apparent. Then, is there anything in the nature of the change which calls for its adoption in the face of the express injunctions of the act to the contrary? It is plain that there is not—nay, that the reason of the thing all lies the other way. The invasion upon the Sinking Fund proposed lies here: The new system does not interfere with the quarterly issue from the Exchequer of the one per cent on each loan, as directed by the Act 1792: it is upon the concurrent application of these several one per cents to the reduction of their respective loans, and upon the transfer of the stock purchased by each of these Sinking Funds, that the change is made. And of the magnitude of this change no clearer proof can be imagined, than that it is held forth by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as likely, in the next four years, to withdraw seven or eight millions sterling from the Sinking Fund to the necessities of the state; and that in twenty years it would prove equal to a loan of a hundred millions.

“The first report of the Committee of Finance in 1797 concludes with these remarkable words:—‘The old Sinking Fund established in 1786 is no longer made applicable, by law, to the discharge at compound interest of what may then remain of the old debt; but the operation of the new Sinking Fund is to continue at compound interest till the new debt shall be wholly discharged.’ Is it possible to express the object of the act, and the intention of the legislature, more clearly than by this drawing the distinction between the Act of 1786 and

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

32.

And fundamental disadvantage of the new one.

33.

The relief which it would afford would be merely temporary.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

that of 1792? The promised subsidy of a hundred and twenty millions is merely a golden dream. It is no doubt true, that if we choose to abandon the Sinking Fund, or any considerable part of it, we shall find ourselves so much the richer for present operations by doing so. Every person who is in the course of paying off a debt, will find the same if he stops in the course of its liquidation, and applies all the funds destined for that purpose to his present necessities. There is nothing new in that: it has been the common excuse for wasteful improvidence from the beginning of the world. But what is to be the ultimate result of such a system? Ruin to the state, as it has been to every individual or family who ever yet pursued it.

“The real bait which is held out is, that this system will for the next three years supersede the necessity of laying on new taxes. Admitting the weight of the public burdens, and the painful duty which it is to propose any addition to them, is it not more manly and statesmanlike at once to do so, than to adopt a change in a system which hitherto has worked so admirably, and substitute for the steady operation of the Sinking Fund under the present laws, which experience has so amply demonstrated to be well founded, a succession of new devices, to which no man can foresee an end? If the public necessities render it absolutely impossible to go on without having recourse to some extraordinary aid, it would be far better to mortgage the Sinking Fund to the extent of two millions yearly for the period, it is to be hoped short, that the war lasts, than to adopt a *permanent* change of system in a particular so vital to the national safety. Any appropriation of the Sinking Fund for a brief period would be preferable to such a lasting alteration on the system, and breaking in upon its efficiency and operation; whereas, by adhering to it with the constancy and resolution which has been hitherto evinced by government, we shall have the absolute certainty that a very

34.

A temporary alienation of part of the fund urged as preferable to a permanent alteration of scheme.

few years of peace will accumulate its annual payments to such an amount, that, in addition to providing for the reduction of the debt to as large an extent as is desirable, perhaps twenty millions a-year, we shall have the pleasing task to perform, of remitting the most oppressive part of the war taxes. To break in upon a system attended with such benefit, is the most dangerous of all innovations. The present system is neither more nor less than stopping the accumulation of the Sinking Fund just now, to add to it hereafter. Such a precedent, once established, will shake the security of our finances to the foundation — that hereafter will never come. Some excuse will always be found for continuing the agreeable task of remitting present taxation by trenching upon the resources of the future; and in the end it will be found that the first step in such a downward system is the first advance to ruin.”¹

CHAP.
LXXVI.
1813.

¹ Parl. Deb.
xxv. 286,
327, 359,
362.

The resolutions of Mr Vansittart were agreed to without a division, and a bill passed in terms thereof.²

² Ibid. 366,
367.

Thus began the new system of British finance: that of shutting our eyes to the future; of considering only the exigencies of the moment; and trenching to any extent upon the interests or the security of subsequent times, provided only a stop can be put to present clamour, or a foundation laid for temporary popularity. Time, the great test of truth, has now completely demonstrated the perilous nature of this innovation, and too clearly verified Mr Tierney's prediction, that it would prove the first step to national ruin. Nor is there, perhaps, to be found in the whole history of human affairs, a more striking proof than the twenty-seven years immediately preceding, and the like period immediately following, the year 1813, afford, of the difference between the results of that manly and provident system of government, which, founded on the foresight of the thinking few, lays, often amidst the clamours and misrepresentations of the unthinking many, the broad and lasting foundations of

35.
Reflections
on this
great change
in our finan-
cial system.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

national greatness ; and that conceding and temporising policy, which, looking only to present objects and the attainment of immediate relief, secures unbounded momentary applause from the heedless multitude, by adopting measures which loosen the fabric of national power, shorten the period of national existence, and bring down upon its authors the lasting execrations of the wise and thoughtful in every future age.

36.
Difference
in the re-
sults of the
two systems.

In the twenty-seven years which elapsed from 1786 to 1813, the finances under Mr Pitt's system were managed with manly constancy, scrupulous regard to the future, and a total disregard of present obloquy. The consequence was, that the Sinking Fund rose in that short time from one to fifteen millions, and the whole debt existing at its commencement, amounting to nearly two hundred and forty millions, had been extinguished at its termination. This happened, too, although twenty years of that period were occupied with the most extensive and costly war that has occurred in the history of mankind, and an expenditure had been forced on the country, which increased its revenue raised by taxation from sixteen millions at its commencement, to sixty-eight millions at its termination. In the twenty-seven years which immediately followed 1813—from 1813 to 1840—a totally different system was followed. Tax after tax, amounting in the whole period to above forty-eight millions sterling, was repealed amidst the general applause of the unthinking many, and the profound indignation of the far-seeing few. Mr Vansittart's precedent of breaking in upon the Sinking Fund was readily adopted on every emergency, until the shadow even of this pillar of national credit disappeared, and for the last three years of the period, not a shilling had been applied to the reduction of debt ; and the nation, which had begun the era with a fixed and certain Sinking Fund of fifteen millions a-year, in full operation, and increasing at compound interest, found itself at its close without any Sinking Fund

whatever, and a deficit which, during the last three years, had amounted to above six millions.* This disastrous change occurred, too, during a period, with the exception of the last year of its continuance, of profound and general peace; in the course of which the population of the empire had increased fully fifty per cent, its agricultural produce in a still greater proportion, and its imports and exports had nearly doubled!† With truth did Sir Joshua Reynolds say, that “the present and the future are rivals; and he who pays court to the one must lay his account with being discountenanced by the other.”

Nor is there any solid foundation for the plausible remark, so often repeated as the justification of government and the people, during this unparalleled increase of national resources and prostration of national strength, that the Sinking Fund redeemed and discharged debt so largely during the first period, because other debt to a much greater amount was contracted; and that it was gradually impaired, and at last totally annihilated, in the second, because the simultaneous contraction of other debt had ceased. This observation, which has been so generally made as to have deluded a whole generation, proceeds upon confounding together two things, in themselves altogether distinct and separate; viz., the provision made by Mr Pitt for paying off, within forty-five years after it was contracted, every separate loan which he was obliged to borrow, and the simultaneous necessity to which he was exposed of contracting debt to an equal or greater amount, for the necessities of the Revolutionary war. It

CHAP.
LXXVI.
1813.

37.
Answer to
the objec-
tion, that
debt was
simultane-
ously con-
tracted dur-
ing the war.

* See Appendix, C, Chap. LXXVI. for two most instructive tables, showing the progressive increase of the Sinking Fund under the one system, and its progressive extinction under the other.

	1814.	1840.
† Population of Great Britain and Ireland,	18,000,000	27,000,000
Exports,	£53,573,234	£102,472,000
Imports,	£33,755,264	£61,268,000
Shipping—Tons, British and Foreign, .	1,889,535	4,783,000
Revenue raised by Taxes,	£68,748,363	£47,250,849

—PORTER'S *Progress of the Nation*, i. 11, ii. 98, and ii. 174; and *Finance and Parliamentary Accounts for 1840*.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

is no doubt true, that, if two hundred and forty millions were paid off before the year 1813, debt to more than double that amount had been contracted ; and it is that fact which has so generally misled the last generation. But these two things had no necessary or even casual connexion with each other. The funds provided for the liquidation of the former were wholly independent of the debts contracted under the necessities of the latter.

33.
The funds
for the pay-
ment of the
debt were
all provided
for by taxes.

If the funds for the discharge of the debt had been drawn solely, or even partly, from borrowing, unquestionably the remark would have been well founded, that you in nowise better your condition by borrowing with the right hand to pay off with the left. But this was not the case. The funds provided for the liquidation of the debt were all drawn from indirect peace taxes, and *would all have existed, if these taxes had not been repealed, after the war loans had entirely ceased.* In private life we are never mistaken in such a case. If a man adopts a regimen which improves and insures his health at ordinary times, we never think of condemning it because he accidentally takes the typhus fever, and, during its continuance, the good effects of the system are overlooked or concealed. It is by its operation in seasons independent of such extraneous calamity that we must judge of its effects ; and if the indirect taxes, laid on for the upholding of the Sinking Fund, had not been repealed under the pressure of no necessity, but from a reckless thirst for popularity on the part of successive governments, and from the effects of the ruinous contraction of the currency in 1819, nothing is more certain than that the debt paid off would, by the year 1840, have been above six hundred millions ; and, instead of a deficit of two millions and a half, we should now have had a surplus of revenue above expenditure, of forty millions annually.* As such a

* See *Ante*, Chap. XL § 24, where this is fully demonstrated.

surplus is obviously unnecessary, relief to a proportional amount in taxes might have been now afforded, with the addition of the pleasing reflection, that it was obtained after the debt was wholly discharged.

CHAP.
LXXXVI.
1812.

Leaving these momentous but melancholy considerations, it is now time to resume the narrative of the glorious concluding events of the war.

The winter which followed the campaign of Salamanca, though not distinguished by any warlike achievements, was one of extraordinary activity and unceasing effort on the part of Wellington. The disasters in which it terminated, as well as the constant and protracted fatigues with which it had been attended throughout its long extent, had in a great degree loosened the bonds of discipline, and impaired the efficiency of the army; and on various occasions, during the siege of Burgos and in the subsequent retreat, it had been observed, that the troops had neither fought with their accustomed spirit, nor gone through their duties with their wonted regularity. Wellington's stern but necessary reproof, which has already been mentioned,¹ had done much to remedy the most glaring evils which had crept in; and he was not slow in setting the first example himself of those useful reforms which he so strongly inculcated on others. Neither rank nor station had been able to screen those in fault. Some had been tried, others dismissed, many allowed to retire home to avoid more painful consequences: and with such effect was the vigilant reformation which pervaded all departments attended, that the second division recovered no less than six hundred bayonets in one month. The ponderous iron camp-kettles hitherto used by the soldiers had been exchanged for lighter ones, similar to those employed in the French service; and the mules which formerly carried them bore tents instead, for the protection of the troops. The Douro had been rendered navigable above the confluence

39.
Wellington's efforts to reorganise his army in the winter of 1812.

¹ *Ante*, ch. lxviii. § 123.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1812.

¹ Nap. v.
403, 404.
Tor. v. 139.
Jom. iv.
345.

of the Agueda ; a pontoon train had been formed ; carts of a peculiar construction, adapted for mountain warfare, made in great numbers ; and a large supply of mules obtained, to supply the great destruction of those useful animals during the retreat from Burgos. Finally, large reinforcements, especially in cavalry, came out during the winter from England ; and before spring arrived, the army, thoroughly recruited in health and vigour during its rest in cantonments, was prepared to take the field in greater strength than it had done since the commencement of the Peninsular war.¹

40.
Wellington
is appointed
generalis-
simo of the
Spanish
armies, and
goes to
Cadiz.

Sept. 22,
1812.

It was an object of not less importance to take some decisive steps for the more effectual organisation of the Spanish army ; and in that quarter at length symptoms of a considerable change were visible. The colossal fame of Wellington, the magnitude of the services he had rendered to the cause of Peninsular independence, the sight of Andalusia liberated by his victories, of Cadiz disenthralled by his arms, had at length conquered alike the sullen obstinacy of Castilian pride and the secret hostility of democratic jealousy ; and the English general was, by a decree of the Cortes, invested with the supreme command of the whole Spanish armies. Such, however, was the disorganised and inefficient state of all the forces of that monarchy, that Mr Henry Wellesley, Wellington's brother, and the British ambassador at Cadiz, advised him not to accept the office, as it was evident that it would excite jealousy and incur responsibility, without increasing strength or conferring power. But the patriotic spirit of the English general, and his clear perception of the obvious truth, that it was only by combining the whole strength of the Peninsula under one direction that the French could be driven across the Pyrenees, overcame the repugnance which he felt at undertaking so onerous and irksome a responsibility, and he accepted the high command. The Spanish government soon found that the new commander-in-chief was not to accept the honours of his

dignified situation without discharging its duties. He early remonstrated in the most energetic terms against the mismanagement of their armies, as calculated to destroy altogether their efficiency in the field;* and as it was evident that a very strong hand would be required to remedy such numerous and long-established evils, he required that officers should be appointed to command solely on his recommendation; that he should be invested with the absolute power of dismissal; and that the resources of the state, which were applicable to the pay and support of the troops, should be applied as he might direct. As the Cortes evinced some hesitation in acceding to these demands, Wellington repaired in person to Cadiz, where he arrived on the 24th of December.¹

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1812.

¹ Wellington to Don Josef de Carvajal minister at war, Dec. 4, 1812. Gurwood, ix. 597. Tor. v 122, 139.

The appointment of Wellington to the command of the Spanish armies led to an immediate explosion on the part of the democratic party in Cadiz. The *Diario Mercantil de Cadiz* loudly denounced the measure as illegal, unconstitutional, and disgraceful to the Spanish character; and it speedily rallied to its cause all that party, strong in every country, but especially so in Spain, with whom jealousy of foreigners is predominant over love of their own country. Such was the clamour which they raised, that it reached the armies; and Ballasteros, a brave and

41.
Revolt of Ballasteros, which leads to his being deprived of his command.

* "The discipline of the Spanish armies is in the very lowest state, and their efficiency is in consequence much deteriorated. The evil has taken a deeper root, and requires a stronger remedy than the removal of the causes—viz. want of pay, clothing, and necessaries—which have necessarily occasioned it. Not only are your armies undisciplined and inefficient, and both officers and soldiers insubordinate, from the want of pay, clothing, and necessaries, and the consequent endurance of misery for a long period; but the habits of indiscipline and insubordination are such, that even those corps which by my exertions have been regularly paid and fed for a considerable period, and seldom if ever felt any privation, are in as bad a state, and as little to be depended on, as the others. The desertion is immense, even from the troops last adverted to. If I had been aware of the real state of the Spanish army, I should have hesitated before I charged myself with such a herculean labour as its command; but, having accepted it, I will not relinquish the task because it is laborious and the success unpromising, but exercise it as long as I possess the confidence of the authorities who have conferred it on me."—WELLINGTON to DON JOSEF DE CARVAJAL, *Spanish Minister at War*, 4th December 1812; GURWOOD, ix. 596, 597.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1812.

Oct. 23.

Nov. 6.

¹ Tor. v.
125, 126.
Nap. v. 399,
400.

42.
Intrigues at
Cadiz, and
arrival of
Wellington
there.

active, but proud and irascible officer, openly evinced a spirit of insubordination, and wrote to the minister of war, demanding that, before the command was definitely conferred on the English general, the national armies and citizens should be consulted. Such an example, if successful, would speedily have proved fatal to the slight bonds of authority which still held together the monarchy; and the Regency, sensible of their danger, acted with a vigour and celerity worthy of the cause with which they were intrusted. Don Ildefonso de Ribera, an artillery officer of distinction, was immediately despatched to Granada, the headquarters of Ballasteros, to deprive him of his command. The dangerous mission was executed with vigour and decision. The Prince of Anglona and Ribera, supported by the corps of the Guards in his army, summoned the insurgent general to resign; he appealed to the other corps to resist the order, but they shrank from the prospect of openly braving the supreme authority, and Ballasteros was conducted to Ceuta without bloodshed, where he was detained a prisoner. But a sense of his services, and the popularity of the stand for national command which he had made, induced the government most wisely not to follow up his arrest with any ulterior proceedings.¹

This unwonted act of vigour on the part of the Spanish government, however, was the result of offended pride rather than roused patriotism. The retreat of Wellington into Portugal soon after renewed the spirit of disaffection in Cadiz; intrigue became more prevalent than ever; the agents of Joseph were indefatigable in their endeavours to represent the cause of independence as now evidently hopeless; and a conspiracy for delivering up the island of Leon, and proclaiming the intrusive monarch King of Spain, was set on foot, and soon acquired a formidable consistency. It not only had its ramifications over the monarchy, but it embraced, beyond all question, some of the intimate friends of the Duke del Infantado,

the president of the regency, and a well-known political *intrigante*, his avowed mistress.¹ We have the authority of Napoleon, accordingly, for the assertion, that at that epoch the Cortes treated in secret with the French; and although the intrigue had hitherto reached only a limited number of its members, yet it was apparent that any continuance of ill success or long protracting of the contest, would speedily lead to a general defection from the cause of independence. In the midst of this maze of treachery Wellington reached Cadiz, and was received with respect by the Cortes, and loud expressions of applause from the anxious multitude.²

CHAP.
LXXXVI.

1812.

¹ Tor. v. 39,
40.² Tor. v. 39,
41. Nap. v.
399, 400.
Las Cases,
iv. 72.

The arrival of the English general at Cadiz was shortly after followed by the intelligence of the total ruin of Napoleon's armament in Russia. The details of that overthrow, as painted with graphic power in the twenty-ninth bulletin, by a singular coincidence arrived there on the very night of a splendid ball given by the grandees of Spain to the victorious leader, and added much to the general enthusiasm which prevailed. His influence with the government was not a little augmented by this stupendous event, which at that period, even more rapidly than it actually occurred, seemed to prognosticate the fall of Napoleon. He was received, in consequence, by the Cortes in full assembly with great pomp on the day following, when in a plain and manly speech, delivered in the Spanish language, he unfolded his views, and energetically enforced the necessity of unanimity and concord, in order to effect the total expulsion of the French from the Peninsula. In consequence of these efforts, a new organisation was given to the Spanish forces, which was soon attended with the happiest effects. They were divided into four armies and two reserves. The first was composed of the troops of Catalonia, under the command of General Copons: Elio's men in Murcia formed the second: the forces in the Sierra Morena, formerly under the command of Ballasteros, now under that of the Duke

43.
Wellington's reception at Cadiz, and measures for the campaign agreed on there.
Dec. 29.

Dec. 30.

CHAP.
LXXXVI.

1813.

del Parque, constituted the third. The troops of Estremadura, Leon, Galicia, and the Asturias, including Murillo's and Carlos d'Espana's separate divisions, were placed under the command of Castanos, and formed the fourth army, which was attached to the grand army of Wellington on the Ebro. It afterwards embraced the guerillas of Porlier, Mina, and Longa. The Conde d'Abisbal was created Captain-general of Andalusia, and commanded the first reserve, composed of new levies formed in that province and Granada; while Lacy was recalled from Catalonia, where he was replaced by Copons, and formed a second reserve in the neighbourhood of San Roque, in the southern extremity of the Peninsula. Having completed these arrangements, which placed the armies under better regulation, and given an infinity of directions for their internal organisation, Wellington returned by Lisbon, where he was received with extraordinary demonstrations of joy, to his old cantonments on the Coa, which he reached in the end of January 1813.¹

¹ Nap. v.
401, 402,
Tor. v. 141,
142. Gur.
x. 61.

44.
Violent
democratic
passions at
Cadiz, and
Wellington's
sage
advice re-
garding
them.

Wellington's visit to Cadiz, though undertaken in order to bring about the more efficient organisation of the Spanish armies, was attended with this important effect, that it brought forcibly under his notice the miserable state of the government at that place, ruled by a furious democratic faction, intimidated by an ungovernable press, and alternately the prey of aristocratic intrigue and democratic fury. He did not fail to report to the British government this deplorable state of things; but he accompanied his representations with the sage advice, which they had the wisdom implicitly to follow, on no account to interfere in the internal disputes of the Cortes and Regency; but, leaving the authorities and people at Cadiz to arrange their domestic disputes, and settle their institutions in their own way, to bend their whole attention to the prosecution of the war, and the expulsion of the enemy from the Peninsula.* On the same principle he

* "The legislative assembly at Cadiz has proclaimed itself supreme, and

strongly recommended to the Cortes to suspend their meditated decree for the abolition of the Inquisition; urging, with reason, that without entering into the question, whether that institution should be maintained or abolished, and even admitting it should ultimately be abolished, it was to the last degree inexpedient to propose its suppression at that particular time, when half the Spanish territory was still in the hands of the enemy, the more especially as any proposal affecting that branch of the church would be sure to alienate the clergy, who had hitherto been the chief, and latterly almost the sole supporters of the war.¹

CHAP.
LXXVI.
1813.

This advice was much too rational to be palatable to men inflamed with the political passions, which at that period raged with such fury in the breasts of the Cortes, and the populace of Cadiz. It was received, accordingly, in sullen silence; and no sooner was the English general

divested itself of all interference with the executive government; yet the executive itself is its creature; while, by a refinement of theory, it is not possible either that the legislative assembly should have a knowledge of the measures of the executive, or the executive know the feelings and sentiments of the legislative. The government and legislature, instead of drawing together, are like two independent powers, jealous and afraid of each other; and the consequence is, that the machine of government is at a stand. The whole system is governed by little local views, as propounded by the daily press of Cadiz—of all others the least enlightened, and the most licentious.

“In a country in which almost all property consists in land—and there are the largest landed proprietors which exist in Europe—no measures have been adopted, and no barrier provided, to guard landed property from the encroachments, injustice, and violence to which it is at all times subject, but particularly in the progress of revolutions. The council of state affords no such guard; it has no voice in legislation, and it neither has the confidence of, nor influence over, the public mind. Such a guard can only be afforded by an assembly of the great landed proprietors, such as our House of Lords, having concurrent powers of legislation with the Cortes; and there is no man in Spain, be his property ever so small, who is not interested in the establishment of such an assembly.

“Legislative assemblies are swayed by the fears and passions of individuals; when unchecked, they are tyrannical and unjust; nay more, the most tyrannical and unjust measures are the most popular. Those measures are peculiarly so which deprive rich and powerful individuals of their properties, under pretence of the public advantage; and I tremble for a country in which, as in Spain, there is no barrier for the preservation of private property, excepting the justice of a legislative assembly possessing supreme powers.” — WELLINGTON to DON DIEGO DE LA VEGA; *Infanzon*, 29th January 1813; GURWOOD, x. 61, 65.

¹ Gurw. x.
61, 64, 66.
Wellington
to Don
Diego de
la Vega,
29th Jan.
1813.

CHAP.
LXXXVI.

1813.

45.

Abolition
of the In-
quisition,
and com-
mencement
of war be-
tween the
democrats
and the
clergy.
March 7.
March 8.

gone, than the dissensions between the two parties broke out with more rancour than ever. Instead of bending their undivided attention to the enemy, who were still at their gates, they were almost wholly engrossed by domestic changes. The clergy were the objects of incessant and rancorous attacks from the democratic party ; the Inquisition was abolished by a formal decree in the beginning of March ; and as the clergy of Cadiz resisted the order, and the government supported them in the attempt, the Cortes instantly passed a decree by which they suppressed the Regency ; and the Archbishop of Toledo, with two old councillors, Pedro Agar and Gabriel Cesiar, were installed as Regents. All the ecclesiastics who resisted these violent usurpations were immediately arrested and thrown into prison, in every part of Spain ; and the revolutionary press, true to its principles, immediately began to pour forth a torrent of abuse against the English government, which had so long supported their country in its misfortunes, and the heroic general and gallant army who were even then preparing to lead them to victory.¹

¹ Wellington to Don Diego de la Vega, 29th Jan. 1813. Gur. x. 61, 66. Nap. v. 401, 406. Tor. v. 143, 210.

46.

Enormous
amount of
the contri-
butions
levied in
the pro-
vinces
under the
French.

The evacuation of the provinces to the south of the Sierra Morena by the French troops, led to a disclosure of the enormous, and, if not proved by authentic evidence, incredible amount of the contributions levied by them during their occupation of these districts. It is demonstrated by the accounts of the royal commissary of Joseph, the Count of Montano, that the sums levied on the different communes of Andalusia, from the period of the entry of the French into the country in February 1810, till that of their final evacuation of it in August 1812, a period of only two years and a half, amounted to the enormous sum of six hundred millions of reals, or above six millions sterling—equivalent, if the difference in the value of money is taken into account, to at least fifteen millions sterling in Great Britain.* When it is recollected that

* The real is about 2½d. English money.—BALBI, *Geog. Univ.* p. 1226.

the population of Andalusia at this period did not exceed 1,400,000 souls; that commerce of every kind was entirely destroyed by the war, and the occupation of the country by the French troops; and that the whole revenue of the monarchy, before the French invasion, was only 178,000,000 francs, or about £7,200,000 sterling,¹ it must be confessed that a clearer proof of the oppressive nature of the imperial government cannot be imagined. On the little province of Jaen, to the south of the Sierra Morena, the burdens imposed during the same period were 21,600,000 reals, or £210,000 a-year; while before the war, the whole taxes, direct and indirect, which it paid, were only 8,000,000 of reals, or £80,000 a-year.²

CHAP.
LXXXVI.

1813.

¹ Malte-
Brun, viii.
133, 134.

² Tor. v. 43,
44, 99.

In the end of June 1812, the six prefectures of Madrid, Cuença, Guadalaxara, Toledo, Ciudad Real, and Segovia, which comprised the whole of the districts over which the authority of Joseph really extended, were compelled, in addition to their ordinary imposts, which were equally severe, to furnish an extraordinary contribution of 560,000 fanegas, of which 275,000 fanegas were oats; the value of which in all was not less than 250,000,000 reals, or £2,500,000 sterling! Such was the magnitude of this requisition, that it would have reduced the country to an absolute desert if the bayonets of the French had been able to extract it from the cultivators, which fortunately could not be entirely done. So ruinous was the effect of these oppressive exactions, that cultivation totally ceased in many parts of the country, and the inhabitants, abandoning their homes, lived as guerillas by plunder. All the French marshals were obliged to enjoin the sowing of the fields by positive orders, and under the severest penalties in case of neglect. Seed-corn, in many cases, had to be provided for this purpose from France; prices rose to an extravagant height; and in Madrid alone, though the population at that period was not above a hundred and forty thousand, twenty thousand persons died, chiefly of famine, between September 1811 and

47.
Enormous
contribu-
tions levied
in kind.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

July 1812, when the English army entered the city. The enormous amount of these contributions, which afford a specimen of the French revolutionary system of government, at once explains how it happened that the exchequer at Paris was able to exhibit such flattering accounts of the state of its finances, so far as they were drawn from the internal resources of the empire ; how the imperial rule was so long popular among those who profited by this spoliation ; and how it excited such universal and unbounded exasperation among those who suffered from it.¹

¹ Tor. v. 43,
44, 99, 100.

48.
Abuses in
the govern-
ment and
administra-
tion of Por-
tugal.

The Portuguese government at this period exhibited the same mixture of arrogance and imbecility which had distinguished them in every period of the war ; and it was only by the incessant efforts of Wellington, aided by the able and energetic exertions of the English minister at Lisbon, Sir Charles Stuart,* that the resources of the country could be saved from private pillage, to be brought forward for the public service. During the absence of the English general in Spain, all the old abuses were fast reviving, the sad bequest of centuries of corruption. The army in the field received hardly any succours ; the field artillery had entirely disappeared ; the cavalry was in miserable condition ; the infantry reduced in numbers, desertion frequent, pay above six months in arrear, and despondency general. Nor was the civil administration on a better footing than the military service. The rich and powerful inhabitants, especially in the great cities, were suffered to evade the taxes and regulations for drawing forth the resources of the country for the military service ; while the defenceless husbandmen were subjected to vexatious oppression, as well from the collectors of the revenue, as the numerous military detachments and convoys which traversed the country. The irritation produced by these causes was eagerly

* Now Lord Stuart de Rothesay.

made use of by the malcontent democratic party, which, anxious to obtain the power and consideration which was enjoyed by the republicans of Cadiz, lost no opportunity of inflaming the public mind against the English administration; and even went so far as to accuse Wellington of aspiring to the Spanish crown, and aiming at the subjugation of the Peninsula for the purposes of his criminal ambition.¹

But the English general, conscious of his innocence, simply observed, that "every leading man was sure to be accused of criminal personal ambition; and, if he was conscious of the charge being false, the accusation did no harm."* Disregarding, therefore, altogether these malignant accusations, he strained every nerve to recruit the army, correct the abuses in the civil administration, and provide funds for the pay of the troops; and so ably was he seconded by Marshal Beresford in the military, and Sir Charles Stuart in the civil service, that, despite all the resistance they met with from the interested local authorities, a remarkable improvement soon became apparent. The holders of bills on the military chest at Lisbon, finding them not paid by government, became clamorous, and these securities sank to a discount of fifteen per cent; but Sir Charles checked the panic, by guaranteeing payment of the bills, and granting interest till the payment was made. At the same time, the vigorous measures of Beresford checked the desertion from, and restored the efficiency of, the army; the militiamen fit for service were drafted into the line; all the artillerymen in the fortresses were forwarded to the army, and their place supplied by ordnance gunners; and the worst cavalry regiments were reduced, and their men incorporated with those in a more efficient state.

CHAP.
LXXXVI.

1813.

¹ Wellington to Prince Regent of Portugal, 12th April 1813. Gur. x. 289, Nap. v. 415.

49.

Vigorous efforts of Wellington to arrest these evils.

* "Intravitque animum militaris gloriæ cupido, ingrata temporibus, quibus sinistra erga eminentes interpretatio, nec minus periculum ex magnâ famâ quam ex malâ."—TACITUS, *Agric.* c. 5. How identical is the virtue of the great and the envy of the little in all ages and countries!

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

¹ Welling-
ton to Prince
Regent of
Portugal,
April 12,
1813. Gur.
x. 283. Nap.
415, 419.

By these means a large addition was obtained to the military force, which proved of essential service to Wellington in the field. But the disorders in the civil administration could not be so easily rectified, and Wellington addressed a memorial on the subject to the Prince-regent in Brazil, which remains an enduring monument to the almost incredible difficulties with which he had to contend, in preparing the means of carrying on his campaigns against the French armies in the Peninsula.¹ *

50.
Miserable
condition
of the
Spanish
armies.

Bad, however, as the condition of the Portuguese troops was, that of the Spanish armies was still more deplorable ; the unavoidable result of the occupation of so large a portion of the country by the enemy's forces, and the entire absorption of the attention of all classes in Cadiz with objects of personal ambition or political innovation, without any attention to the main object—the paying, equipping, and feeding of their troops. Their armies, indeed, were numerous, and the men bold as individuals, and not deficient in spirit ; but they were for the most part ill-disciplined, and totally destitute of clothing, stores, magazines, and organisation of any kind. Their condition was thus painted at the moment by a master-hand, who had had too much reason to be acquainted with the facts which he asserts :—“ There is not a single battalion or squadron in the Spanish armies in a condition to take the field ; there is not in the whole kingdom of Spain a depot of provisions for the support of a single battalion in operation for one day ; not a shilling of money in any military chest.² To move them forward at

² Welling-
ton to Span-
ish minister
at war,
March 11,
1813. Gur.
x. 181.

* “ The transport service since February 1812, when we took the field, has never been regularly paid, and has received nothing at all since June. To these evils I have striven in vain to call the attention of the local authorities ; and I am now about to open a new campaign with troops to whom greater arrears of pay are due than when the last campaign terminated, although the subsidy from Great Britain, granted specially for the maintenance of those troops, has been regularly paid, and the revenue of the last three months has exceeded by a third that of any former quarter. The great cities and some of the small towns have gained by the war : the mercantile class have enriched themselves

any point now, against even inconsiderable bodies of the enemy, would be to insure their certain destruction."

CHAP.
LXXXVI.

By indefatigable exertions, however, these evils, so far as the supplies and reinforcements for the army were concerned, were overcome; and Wellington, in the beginning of May, was prepared to take the field with a much larger and more efficient force than had ever yet been assembled around the English banners since the commencement of the war. Nearly two hundred thousand Allied troops were in readiness in the whole Peninsula; and although not more than the half of this immense body were English, Germans, or Portuguese, upon whom reliance could really be placed, yet the remainder, being now under the direction of Wellington, and acting in concert with his army, proved of the most essential service, by taking upon them the duty of maintaining communications, guarding convoys, blockading fortresses, and cutting off light and foraging parties of the enemy. They thus left the Anglo-Portuguese force in undiminished strength, to maintain the serious conflict in the front of the advance. What was almost an equal advantage, this great force, which in the course of the campaign came to stretch across the whole Peninsula, from the sources of the Ebro in Biscay to its junction with the ocean, was supported on either flank by a powerful naval armament, the true base of offensive operations for Great Britain, which at once secured supplies without any lengthened land carriage, and protected the extreme flanks of the line from hostile assault.¹

1813.
51.
Forces with which Wellington was prepared to open the campaign.

¹ Nap. v.
505, 506.
Tor. v. 234,
237.

This vast accumulation of armed men, which now, for

by the large disbursements which the army makes in money; but the customs paid at Lisbon and Oporto, and the ten per cent levied on the incomes of the mercantile class, are not really paid to the state; although their amount, if faithfully accounted for to the public, would be amply sufficient for the public service. The government *do nothing to arrest these evils, from a dread of becoming unpopular*; and therefore I have offered to take upon myself the whole responsibility of the measures. I propose to remedy them, and take upon myself all the odium they may create."—WELLINGTON to PRINCE REGENT OF PORTUGAL, 12th April 1813; GURWOOD, x. 283.

CHAP.
LXXXVI.

1813.

52.
Distribu-
tion of these
forces.

the first time in the history of the war, brought the British army to something like an equality with the imperial legions to which they were opposed, was thus distributed. The noble Anglo-Portuguese army, now mustering seventy-five thousand combatants, of whom forty-four thousand were British, with ninety guns and six thousand horse, was on the Portuguese frontier, near the sources of the Coa, burning with ardour, and ready at a moment's warning to start against the enemy, over whom they already anticipated a decisive victory. The Anglo-Sicilian army, under Sir John Murray, was at the extremity of the line, in the neighbourhood of Alicante, and numbered sixteen thousand men, of whom eleven thousand were English and of the King's German Legion, upon whom reliance could be placed, and the remainder foreign troops, chiefly from the Mediterranean, in the British service. Copon's Spaniards, six or eight thousand strong, occupied the mountain country and upper ends of the valleys in Catalonia, and might be expected to co-operate with Murray in the operations on the Lower Ebro. Elio's men, twenty thousand in number, were behind Murray in Murcia; but they were as yet in a very inefficient state, and could not be trusted in presence of the enemy. The third army, under the Duke del Parque, mustered twelve thousand combatants, who were posted in the defiles of the Sierra Morena. The first army of the reserve, under the Conde d'Abisbal, was in Andalusia, and consisted nominally of fifteen thousand men; but the greater part were mere raw recruits, who were wholly unfit for active service. The only Spanish force upon which reliance could really be placed, was the fourth army under Castanos in Estremadura, and on the frontiers of Leon and Gallicia, which was destined to act in conjunction with the grand army under Wellington. It included the Spanish divisions in Estremadura; the Galicians under Giron; the Asturians under Porlier; and the guerillas of Mina and Longa.¹ These comprised the whole troops able to take the field

¹ Nap. v. 505, 506. Vict. et Conq. xxii. 243. Tor. v. 233, 236. Wellington to Sir T. Graham, April 7, 1813. Gur. x. 270.

in the west and north-west of Spain, and mustered forty thousand combatants, who, though not equal to the encounter of the French in regular conflicts, were for the most part old soldiers inured to hardship, and trained to irregular warfare, and who rendered, in consequence, important service in the course of the campaign.

The French forces in the Peninsula, though considerably reduced by the drafts which the necessities of Napoleon, after the disasters of Russia, compelled him to make from his veteran legions in that quarter, were still very formidable, and exhibited a sum-total of combatants, both superior in number to the Allied forces, and incomparably more concentrated and better disciplined than the greater part of them. The most powerful part of it consisted of the army commanded by Joseph in person, which, by drawing together the whole disposable military power of the French in the Peninsula, had compelled Wellington to evacuate the Spanish territory in the close of the last campaign. Their whole force, which, at the termination of the retreat into Portugal, was still two hundred and sixty thousand strong, was now reduced by the drafts into Germany, in March 1813, to two hundred and thirty-one thousand, of whom twenty-nine thousand were horse. Of these, only one hundred and ninety-seven thousand were present with the eagles; and sixty-eight thousand were under Suchet in Aragon, Valencia, and Catalonia. Of the remainder, ten thousand were at Madrid; eight thousand were in Old Castile and Leon, to watch the motions of the Anglo-Portuguese army; and the rest, to the number of forty thousand, preserved the communications in the northern provinces, and maintained a painful partisan warfare with the insurrection, which had now assumed a very serious character, in Biscay and Navarre.^{1*}

But although the French forces were thus superior in

CHAP.
LXXVI.
1813.

53.
Position and
strength of
the French
armies in
the Penin-
sula.

¹ Belm. i.
249. Vict.
et Cong.
xxii. 243.
Nap. v. 505,
506. Impe-
rial muster-
rolls, *ibid.*
618.

* See Appendix, D, Chap. LXXVI.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

54.
Their latent
sources of
weakness
and dis-
union.

numerical amount, and greatly stronger from their concentrated position, homogeneous character, and uniform discipline, than the multifarious host of the Allies to which they were opposed, yet there were many causes which tended to depress their spirit, and brought them into the field with much less than their wonted vigour and animation. It was universally felt that they had been worsted in the last campaign; that they had lost half, and the richest half, of Spain; and that their hold of the remainder had been everywhere loosened. The charm of their invincibility, the unbroken series of their triumphs, were at an end. The soldiers no longer approached the English but with secret feelings of self-distrust, the necessary consequence of repeated defeats. Their chiefs, dreading to measure swords with Wellington, became nervous about their responsibility; and, anticipating defeat, were chiefly solicitous to discover some mode of averting the vials of the imperial wrath, which they were well aware would burst on their heads the moment intelligence of disaster reached Napoleon. Co-operation there was none between the leaders of their armies. Suchet was jealous of Soult, and yielded a tardy obedience to the commands of Joseph himself; Jourdan, who commanded the army of the centre, was a respectable veteran, but wholly unequal to the task of meeting the shock of Wellington at the head of eighty thousand men; and Soult, though a most able man in strategy and the preparations for a campaign, had shown himself at Albuera unequal to the crisis of a pitched battle. He laboured, also, under heavy suspicions on the part of his royal master, and he had been called to Germany to assist in stemming the torrent of misfortune on the Elbe, as much from the dread of his ambition as the want of his arm. The disasters of the Moscow campaign were known; the fatal twenty-ninth bulletin had been published; and its effects had become painfully visible in the march of a considerable part of the army across

the Pyrenees, to be replaced only by raw battalions of conscripts, very different from the bronzed veterans who had departed. Thus the army had lost both its consistency and its spirit; its generals were at variance with each other, and each was solicitous only for the interests of his separate province; and its supreme direction, divided between the distant commands, often found wholly inapplicable on the spot, of Napoleon, and the weaker judgment of Joseph and Jourdan, was little calculated to stem the torrent of disaster accumulating round a sinking empire and a falling throne.¹

CHAP.
LXXVI.
1813.

¹ Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
241, 242.
Belm. i.
248, 249.

It had been the sage policy of Wellington, during the winter which succeeded the campaign of Salamanca, to retain the Spanish armies, so far as it was possible, at a distance from the enemy; and rather to permit considerable districts meanwhile to be ravaged by the hostile troops, than to run the hazard of blasting all the prospects of the campaign, by exposing the ill-disciplined levies of his allies to certain destruction, from being prematurely brought into conflict with the veteran legions of the foe. On this principle, he had resolutely withstood the repeated instances of the minister of war at Cadiz, who had urged him to move forward the Duke del Parque's forces from the Sierra Morena, to rescue from devastation the southern provinces of La Mancha. Operations first commenced on the eastern coast of Spain, where Sir John Murray had landed at Alicante in the end of February, and hastened to put the army on a better footing than it had as yet attained; for so little had the British government profited by their experience of the bad effect of a change of commanders at the time of the battle of Vimeira, that no less than three different generals had been called to the direction of the army in Murcia within four months. By the united efforts of Murray and Elio, the Allied troops were soon put into a more efficient condition, and were found to amount to twenty-seven thousand infantry, and three thousand horse, with thirty-seven guns. Deem-

55.
Operations
on the east
coast of the
Peninsula.

Feb. 27.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

March 6.

¹ Nap. v.
454, 457.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
254, 255.
Tor. v. 250.

56.
Force and
position of
Suchet at
this period.

ing himself now in sufficient force to commence active operations, the English general moved forward from Alicante towards Valencia, in four columns, and after some inconsiderable skirmishes, approached Suchet's intrenched camp behind the Xucar. But, finding it too strong for him to risk an assault, he concentrated the bulk of his troops at CASTALLA, while a division of British troops under Roche was despatched to Alicante, with orders to embark and endeavour to make itself master of Valencia, which was defended only by a garrison of a thousand infantry and eight hundred horse, while the attention of Suchet and the main body of his forces was occupied by the operations in the interior on the Xucar.¹

Suchet at this period had ceased to make Valencia his stronghold and *place d'armes*, and had transferred his principal magazines and military stores to Saguntum, the fortifications of which he had repaired and strengthened with the utmost care, and which was now become a most formidable point of defence. He had forty thousand admirable veterans under his command, and thirty thousand more occupied the fortresses and level parts of Catalonia, from whom reinforcements could be drawn to resist any serious attack. But as his chief reliance for provisions was still placed on the great agricultural plains of Aragon, and the communication from them was much intercepted by the guerilla parties, a large part of this force required to be stationed in the rear, to keep up his communications; and he could not muster more than sixteen thousand infantry and two thousand horse, with thirty guns, for active operations beyond the Xucar. These, however, were all tried veterans, who had never yet suffered defeat, and whose confidence was far from being broken, as that of the troops opposed to Wellington had been, by repeated disasters. Though Valencia was nominally the seat of Suchet's power, yet it was now incapable of defence; he had razed all the external defences erected by the Spaniards, and confined his

garrison to the old walls. His real stronghold was Saguntum; to connect which with Tortosa he had materially added to the defences of Oropesa and Peniscola on the sea-coast, and established a line of block-houses for infantry in the interior, through Morilla and Mequinenza. In the double range of mountains beyond the Xucar, at Xativa and Moxente, he had also constructed an intrenched camp, which, though not strongly fortified, was very susceptible of defence from the natural strength of its situation; and he had outposts at Biar and Castalla, to observe and retard the advance of the Allied troops.¹

CHAP.
LXXVI.
1813.

“The able pacific administration of Suchet,” says that marshal, “had enabled him successfully to levy the enormous war contribution of 200,000,000 of reals, or 50,000,000 francs, (£2,000,000,) imposed on the city and provinces by order of Napoleon, after its surrender by Blake in 1811. And, independently of this enormous burden, his whole troops were clothed, fed, and lodged at the expense of the districts they occupied; and 25,000,000 francs (£1,000,000) were realised in the last nine months of their occupation, part of which was remitted to Madrid. Yet Suchet’s government was incomparably the most lenient and best administered of that of any of the French marshals in Spain.” This may convey some idea of what the military government of Napoleon was under his more unscrupulous or rapacious lieutenants.²

¹ Suchet’s
Mém. ii.
303, 305.
Nap. v. 450,
454. Tor. v.
251.

57.
Immense
levies of
money by
Suchet on
Valencia.

Atlas,
Plate 48.

² Suchet’s
Mém. ii.
294, 295.

Feeling himself thus secure, from the quality of his troops, and the strength of the position on which he might, in case of need, fall back; and aware, also, that Murray’s advance was part of the general plan of Wellington to force the French across the Ebro, Suchet resolved to assume the offensive, as soon as he learned that the detachment of Roche had been sent to Alicante. He was the more encouraged to do this, as Lord William Bentinck, alarmed at the dissensions in Sicily, and the

58.
Suchet re-
sumes the
offensive,
and defeats
the Spanish
advanced
guard.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

March 29.

April 6.

April 11.

threats of a descent by Murat, recalled the troops sent to Alicante to menace Valencia, for the defence of that island; and thus rendered entirely abortive the project of a double attack on the posts of the French general. Roche's English troops having embarked for Minorca in the first week of April, Suchet concentrated his troops and attacked the Spanish advanced guard at Yecla, which immediately fell back; but being overtaken in its retreat by Harispe's division, it was totally defeated, with the loss of two hundred killed and fifteen hundred prisoners. On the same day the Spanish garrison of Villena, eight hundred strong, were made prisoners, from Elio's obstinate refusal to obey Murray's order to withdraw it. Murray upon this concentrated his troops, and, leaving Colonel Adam with the rearguard in front of the pass of Biar, withdrew the main body of his army through that rugged defile, and took post on strong ground about three miles above the upper end of the pass. The Spaniards under Whittingham formed the left, on the rugged sierra of Castalla; the right, composed of Clinton's British division and Roche's Spaniards, was posted on the low ground, with the bed of a torrent in their front; and the town and old castle of Castalla, on a conical hill in the centre, was occupied by Mackenzie's division, and all its approaches strongly guarded by artillery.¹

¹ Nap. v.
461, 462.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
255. Tor. v.
252, 253.

59.
Battle of
Castalla.

Emboldened by the early and rapid success of his arms against the Spaniards, Suchet, after much hesitation, determined to attack the British in their position, and for this purpose to force the pass of Biar. Adam's advanced guard, consisting of two Italian regiments, a British battalion, and two troops of foreign hussars, assailed by far superior forces, retreated, bravely fighting, up the pass: the French pursued with great vigour, their skirmishers swarming up the rocky acclivities on either side with extraordinary agility and resolution: it was the counterpart of the forcing of the defile at Roliça by the British, in the commencement of the Peninsular

war.¹ Alarmed at this success of the enemy, by which he lost two guns, Murray, notwithstanding the strength of his position, gave orders for a retreat ; but, fortunately for the honour of England, the attack commenced before it could be carried into execution, and Suchet for the first time in his life was taught the quality of British troops. The ascent on the left, where Whittingham's Spaniards were posted, was so rugged that it was with great difficulty that the steep was surmounted : slowly, however, the French gained ground, and in some places reached the summit. Such as did so were proceeding along it when they met the 27th regiment, who, previously lying down concealed among the rocks,* suddenly sprang up and gave them such a volley, within pistol-shot, as sent the whole headlong, with dreadful loss, down the side of the ridge. The attack on the other points was, in like manner, repulsed by the steady valour of the English and German troops ; and at length, Suchet, despairing of success, drew off his men in great confusion towards the pass of Biar.²

CHAP.
LXXXVI.

1813.

¹ *Ante*, ch.
liv. § 62.

² Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
256. Sir J.
Murray's
Account,
April 13,
1813. Gur.
x. 353. Tor.
v. 254.
Suchet, ii.
307.

60.
Defeat of
the French.

Now was the time for the Allies to have advanced in pursuit : the narrow defile, three miles long, was in Suchet's rear, and in endeavouring to get back through the gorge, all his guns, and probably part of his army, would have been taken by a vigorous enemy thundering in pursuit. Donkin,† the quartermaster-general, who clearly saw that the decisive moment had arrived, put himself at the head of Mackenzie's division, and was gallantly assailing the French rearguard, which strove to make good the entrance of the pass ; Suchet, with his

* An event happened here, which recalls the heroic ages of the Iliad or Amadis de Gaul. As the French were deploying their columns, a grenadier officer, advancing alone, challenged any English officer to single combat. The offer was immediately accepted by Captain Waldron of the 27th, who sprang out of his company to meet him ; the hostile lines looked on without firing a shot, and at the first encounter the Frenchman's head was cleft asunder. The 27th with a loud shout brought down their arms, and gave the volley which hurled the French down the steep.—NAP. v. 465.

† Afterwards Sir Rufane Donkin, a most gallant and enterprising officer.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

infantry, cavalry, and caissons, pell-mell, had plunged into the defile in great disorder, and a vigorous effort would have thrown the whole into irretrievable confusion in its narrow windings, and given the British, in their first essay in the east of the Peninsula, a triumph as decisive, though with inferior bodies of men, as those of Hohenlinden or the Katzbach. But Murray, satisfied with the success already achieved, snatched victory from their grasp, and, in spite of the energetic remonstrances of Donkin, drew off his forces, and allowed the enemy to make their way through the defile unmolested. The consequence was, that Suchet brought off his whole guns and ammunition waggons; but such had been the close and deadly fire of the British troops, that in the previous action he lost eighteen hundred men; and, what was of still more importance, his moral influence was materially weakened by having suffered a defeat in his first serious encounter with the British troops. After this defeat, the French general resumed his position in his intrenched camp; and Murray, weakened by the loss of Roche's British troops, who had been recalled by Lord William Bentinck, did not feel himself in sufficient strength to resume offensive operations in that quarter till the battle of Vitoria gave a new complexion to the war.¹

¹ Sir J. Murray's Account, April 14, 1813. Gur. x. 353. Nap. v. 465, 466. Tor. v. 254, 255. Vict. et Conq. xxii. 260.

61.
Operations in the northern provinces.

² *Ante*, ch. lxvi. § 62.

Though Wellington had anxiously enjoined the whole Spanish generals, in every part of the Peninsula, to abstain from hostilities, and withdraw as much as possible from the attacks of the enemy, yet it was impossible to carry these directions implicitly into execution in the northern provinces. A most formidable insurrection, as already mentioned,² had broken out in Biscay, upon occasion of the concentration of the French troops in 1811, to cover Ciudad Rodrigo when menaced by Wellington—which had been powerfully supported by succours from the British fleet. All the efforts of the French, during the winter and spring, had been unable to dispossess the insurgents from

the principal strongholds which they then acquired. The guerillas had become much more experienced and systematic in their operations; their bands in the interior had swelled into small armies; they possessed several fortified posts on the coast, which enabled them to communicate at pleasure with, and receive supplies of arms and ammunition from the English ships of war, these supplies being now dealt with a judgment and liberality which proved of the most essential service. The partidas in these provinces were no longer composed of reckless and desperate characters, who had been ruined by the events of the war, but embraced young men of the best families, who had at first taken no part in the contest, but whom the dreadful severities of Marshal Bessières had drawn forth into the ranks of their country.¹ In Biscay alone several battalions of this description, each a thousand strong, had been formed; and so completely had they succeeded in intercepting the communication along the great road from Bayonne to Madrid, that Joseph only received his despatches of the 4th January on the 18th March, and then by the circuitous route of Barcelona and Valencia.²*

CHAP.
LXXXVI.
1813.

¹ *Ante*, ch. lxxvi. § 19.

² *Nap. v.* 433, 434. Buquet to Berthier, Feb. 3, 1813. *Belm.* i. App. 109, p. 682.

This formidable insurrection excited, as well it might, the anxious attention of Napoleon, threatening as it did his principal line of communication with all his armies

* "If reinforcements do not speedily arrive in Navarre, I shall not be surprised at any catastrophe that may occur. The insolence of the brigands proves the confidence they feel in their operations. I am assured it has never been so great. Their organisation into battalions, and the administration of the country, is complete; it is difficult to over-estimate the advantages they derive from it. If from the frontiers of Portugal our armies had sent some divisions to occupy the left bank of the Ebro, before the winter was over we would have purged this fine country of the brigands who infest it; and in spring these divisions, perfectly re-established, would have been able to resume their operations against the eternal enemies of the Continent. Much precious time has already been lost, and it will be necessary to do in spring what should have been done in winter. The brigands push their audacity to such a pitch as to levy contributions in the provinces occupied by our troops. My prince, the evil is great, and strong remedies are loudly called for. They are to be found alone in the development of a powerful military force."—*Lettre de BUQUET, Commandant de la Gendarmerie de l'Armée d'Espagne, au Prince BERTHIER, Vitoria, 3d Fevrier 1813; BELMAS, i. 682, App.*

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

62.

Napoleon's
instructions
on this
emergency
to Joseph.

beyond the Pyrenees, and paralysing the whole operations in the Peninsula, by the impossibility either of obtaining information, despatching orders, or sending succours, save under the guard of whole divisions. His instructions to meet the danger were characterised by his usual decision and ability. "Hold," said he to Joseph, "Madrid and Valencia only as points of observation; fix your headquarters, not as monarch, but as general of the French forces, at Valladolid; concentrate the armies of the south, of the centre, and of Portugal, around you. The Allies will not, and indeed cannot, make any serious offensive movement for several months; wherefore it is your business to profit by their forced inactivity, to put down the insurrection in the northern provinces, to free the communication with France, and re-establish a good base for operations, before the commencement of another campaign, that the French army may be in a condition to fight the Allies, if they advance towards France." To enable Joseph to effect the desired pacification of the northern provinces, he was authorised to summon to Valladolid, if necessary, the whole army of Portugal. But when he came to inquire of Count Reille, its commander, how soon these directions could be obeyed, he was answered, that that army, having recently remitted three million six hundred thousand francs, seized forcibly by Marmont, to France, and being totally destitute of horses and carriages, was in no condition to undertake any offensive operations.¹

¹ Napoleon to Joseph, Jan. 29, 1813. Nap. v. 606, and Reille to the Duc de Feltre, Dec. 27, 1812. Belm. i. 680.

63.

Napoleon's
instructions
for the sup-
pressing of
the northern
insurrec-
tion.

Joseph, however, was less intent on carrying into effect these judicious instructions, than on getting quit of Soult, whom he openly accused of criminal ambition, adding, that matters had come to that pass between them, that one or other must quit Spain.* In consequence of this

* "The Duke of Dalmatia or myself must quit Spain. At Valencia, I had so far forgotten my own injuries, and suppressed my own indignation, that instead of sending Soult to France, I gave him the direction of the operations of the armies; but it was in the hope that shame for the past, combined with his avidity for glory, would urge him to extraordinary exertion. Nothing of

flagrant disunion, as well as of Napoleon's own need of Soult's military abilities in the arduous German campaign on which he was entering, that marshal was summoned to Germany, where he bore, as will soon appear, a distinguished part in the battles on the Elbe. The Emperor, however, incessantly urged his brother to concentrate his troops on the Ebro, and strain every nerve to put down the insurrection in the north; and being discontented with the mode in which Caffarelli had conducted the partisan warfare there, he gave Clausel the command, and enjoined him to resume the offensive without loss of time, and strike at the enemy's principal depots and magazines, in order to deprive them of the means of carrying on the contest.* Clausel assumed the command on the 22d February; reinforcements, nearly twenty thousand strong, from the army of Portugal, soon after arrived; and the Spaniards soon felt that they had a very different antagonist to deal with from the general who, during the winter, had permitted so serious an insurrection to grow up in the mountain districts.¹

CHAP.
LXXXVI.
1813.

¹ Nap. v.
485, 489.
Napoleon to
Clausel,
Feb. 7,
1813. Ibid.
v. 486.

Clausel repaired early in the middle of March to Bilbao, which was in a manner besieged by the guerillas; and,

the kind, however, has happened: he is a man not to be trusted. Restless, intriguing, ambitious, he would sacrifice everything to his own advancement; and he possesses just that sort of talent that would lead him to mount a scaffold at the time he thought he was ascending a throne, because he would want the courage to strike when the crisis arrived. At the passage of the Tormes, I acquit him of treachery, because there fear alone prevented him from bringing the Allies to battle; but he was nevertheless treacherous to the Emperor; and his proceedings in Spain were probably connected with Malet's conspiracy in Paris."—KING JOSEPH to NAPOLEON, *Feb. 27th*, 1813. NAPIER, v. 437, 438.

* "The partidas are strong, organised, exercised, and seconded by the general exultation produced by the battle of Salamanca. The insurrectional juntas have been revived; the posts on the coast abandoned by the French, and seized by the English; the bands enjoy all the resources of the country, and the system of warfare hitherto pursued has favoured this progress. The French have remained always on the defensive: you must adopt a contrary system. Attack suddenly, pursue rapidly; aim at the Spaniards' magazines, depôts of arms, and hospitals; disorganise the insurrection, and one or two successes will pacify the whole country."—NAPOLEON to CLAUSEL, *9th February* 1813; NAP. v. 486.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

64.
The gueril-
las' suc-
cessful
operations
in Biscay.
March 15.
April 1.

April 5.

¹ Belm. i.
251. Tor.
v. 238, 242.
Nap. v. 489,
494.65.
Clausel's
vigorous
campaign
against
them.

May 13.

May 22.

after some sharp fighting, drove them back into their mountain strongholds in the neighbourhood of Durango. He immediately began his preparations for the siege of Castro, the most important fortress which they possessed on the coast, and by which they constantly communicated with the English ships of war. While he was so engaged, however, Bilbao was again threatened by the partidas, and very nearly fell into their hands. Mina defeated one of his columns near Lerina, with the loss of eight hundred men; the same enterprising chief had made himself master of Tafalla, with its garrison of five hundred men: forty thousand men were in arms in Navarre and Biscay, of which sixteen thousand were on the coast of Biscay and Guipuscoa, acting in conjunction with the British fleet; and eighteen thousand, who could unite in a day, occupied both banks of the upper part of the Ebro. It was a serious and a harassing warfare, in the face of such a force, possessing the whole mountain strongholds of the country, to attempt the siege of Castro in form; but Clausel's vigour and ability were equal to the undertaking.¹

With this view, he organised his forces into two divisions; and while Palombini, with six thousand men, commenced the siege, Foy, with ten thousand, covered the operations; and he himself, with thirteen thousand, took post at Puente la Reyna, in Navarre, to make head against Mina, Longa, and the numerous bands of insurgents in that quarter. Several actions ensued, in which the Spaniards were worsted; and at length Mina himself was totally defeated in the valley of Ronçal, with the loss of a thousand killed or wounded; the remainder dispersed, and the chief himself escaped with only fourteen men. He soon reassembled his scattered band, however, and near Lerina destroyed two regiments of French cavalry. But still the dispersion of Mina's corps, even for a time, considerably lowered the spirit of the insurgents; and Clausel, establishing his headquarters at Pampeluna, succeeded in

pacifying several of the valleys of Navarre. Meanwhile, Castro was carried by storm ; and Foy, following up Napoleon's instructions, pushed forward against the depots and magazines of the Biscayan insurgents, and nearly destroyed three of their finest battalions. But though this brilliant success attended the French arms on the coast and in Navarre, it was wellnigh balanced by the advantages gained by the enemy, who, during the absence of the main forces of the French in these flank operations, fell upon the high road from Bayonne to Burgos, and captured several of the block-houses, putting the garrisons to the sword. Indeed Clausel, worn out with this interminable warfare, declared it would require fifty thousand men and three months to put down the northern insurrection ; and Napoleon bitterly complained that all the successes of Foy, Sarrut, and Palombini, had brought neither safety to his convoys nor regularity to his couriers.¹

But greater events were now on the wing : the chiefs on both sides repaired to their respective headquarters, and the mutual concentration of troops bespoke the approach of serious warfare. Joseph, who had quitted Madrid in the middle of March with his guards, had subsequently fixed his headquarters at Valladolid, from whence he had detached the divisions Foy, Taupin, Sarrut, and Barbot, to aid Clausel in the reduction of Biscay and Navarre. This large deduction from the main army was attended with the most important effects in the course of the campaign ; for Wellington was now collecting his forces, and the progress of spring having provided ample forage for his horses, he was prepared to march. Never had the army been so numerous or so healthy, never its spirits so high. Twenty thousand men had rejoined their ranks from the hospitals since the troops went into winter-quarters in December, and the meanest drummer was inspired with the belief that he was about to march from victory to victory, till the French eagles were chased across the Pyrenees.²

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

May 25.

— 29.

¹ Nap. v.
489, 502.
Belm. i.
251. Tor.
v. 238, 246.

66.
Wellington
prepares to
take the
field. Fine
condition of
his army.

² Gurw. x.
357. Nap.
v. 567, 568.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
243.

CHAP.
LXXVI.
1813.
67.
His plan of
operations.
March 17.

Wellington's plan was to move the left wing of his army across the Douro, within the Portuguese frontier ; to march it up the right bank of that river, as far as Zamora ; and then, crossing the Esla, unite it to the Galician forces ; while the centre and right, advancing from the Agueda by Salamanca, forced the passage of the Tormes, and drove the French entirely from the line of the Douro, towards the Carrion. Constantly threatening them in flank by the left wing, which was to be always kept in advance, he thus hoped the enemy would be driven back by Burgos into Biscay, and he himself would succeed in establishing there a new basis for the war, resting on the numerous and fortified seaports on the coast, and supported by the gallant mountaineers, who in such strength had maintained through the winter a bloody and equal contest with the enemy. In this way, while he advanced his forces, and drove back the enemy towards their own frontiers, he would at once draw nearer to his own resources, and intercept the whole communications of the enemy. This project was attended with this obvious danger, that the army being formed into two grand divisions, with great ranges of mountains and impassable rivers between them, either was exposed to the risk of a separate attack from the whole forces of the enemy. But Wellington relied, with reason, for the means of obviating this danger, upon the strong nature of the country to which either might retire in case of danger, the high spirit and admirable discipline of his troops, and the universal fidelity of the peasantry, which prevented his designs from becoming known to the enemy.¹

¹ Wellington to Lord Bathurst, May 5, 1813. Gurw. x. 357. Nap. v. 567, 569. Belm. i. 252. Vict. et Conq. xxii. 243.

68.
March of
Wellington
into Spain.
May 22.

The march began on the 22d May, and on the 23d headquarters were at Ciudad Rodrigo. Ample employment for Suchet was at the same time secured, by directions sent to Sir John Murray to embark his troops, and, landing in Catalonia, commence the siege of Tarragona. A bridge equipage was prepared for the passage of the

Douro ; the army of the Duke del Parque advanced from the Sierra Morena into La Mancha, and that of the reserve in Andalusia broke up from Seville on the 12th, and on the 24th was to be at the bridge of Almaraz, so as to threaten Madrid and the provinces in the centre of Spain. Preparations were at the same time made, as soon as the columns reached the frontiers of Biscay or Galicia, for throwing off the communications with Lisbon, and drawing the whole supplies of the army from the nearer harbours of these northern provinces. Seventy thousand English and Portuguese, and twenty thousand Spaniards, were so disposed that they were all to bear in front or flank on the surprised and disjoined columns of the enemy, who would be forced back in confusion, it was hoped, into the passes of the Pyrenees. Hope pervaded every bosom, joy beat high in every heart : the veterans marched over the scenes of their former glory, the halo of twenty victories playing round their bayonets ; the new soldiers burned with desire to emulate their well-earned fame. The English commander shared the general exultation ; and so confidently did he anticipate the defeat of the enemy, and the permanent transference of the seat of war to the north of the Peninsula, that, in passing the stream which marks the frontier of Spain, he rose in his stirrups, and, waving his hand, exclaimed—
“ Farewell, Portugal ! ”¹

¹ Nap. v.
512, 513.
Wellington
to Lord Ba-
thurst, May
25, 1813.
Gurw. x.
399.

The march of the Duke del Parque's army and the reserve from Andalusia, which commenced ten days earlier than that of the Grand Army of Wellington, to give them time to get forward before the latter moved, was attended with the very best effect. They spread the alarm in Madrid and New Castile before the direction of the march of the British army could be known, and, by inducing the belief that a combined attack on the capital was intended, prevented that concentration of force on the Upper Ebro by which alone the march of the British general could have been arrested. Accordingly, when the

69.
Head advances
by Ciudad
Rodrigo and
Salamanca
across the
Douro.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

May 25.

May 23.

¹ Nap. v.
520, 525.
Belm. i.
552, 253.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
253, 254.
Wellington
to Lord
Bathurst,
June 6,
1813. Gur.
x. 421.

70.

Burgos is
evacuated,
and the
French
retreat to
the Ebro.

centre and right of the English army were advancing from Ciudad Rodrigo to the Douro, and Graham, with the left in advance, was toiling through the Tras-os-Montes, not more than thirty-five thousand men, with a hundred guns, were concentrated at Valladolid; and the whole French posts at Madrid, and in the valley of the Tagus, were in alarm, expecting an immediate attack in that quarter. Thus, when danger really threatened from the side of Salamanca, no means of resisting it existed. The line of the Tormes was at once abandoned, with some loss to the retreating army in passing that river; three days after, the Douro was crossed by them at Zamora, and the bridge there destroyed; the British passed the Esla by the fords, and the Douro by a bridge thrown over above Zamora, and at Toro. Wellington himself, who had set off in advance of his troops, passed the river at Miranda, by means of a basket slung on a rope stretched from precipice to precipice, at an immense height above the foaming torrent. Graham had encountered many difficulties on his march through the mountains within the Portuguese frontier; but his vigour and perseverance, seconded by the zeal and energy of his troops, had overcome them all: forty thousand men had been transported, as if by enchantment, in ten days, through two hundred miles of the most broken and rugged country in the Peninsula; and on the 3d June the whole army was in communication on the northern bank of the Douro, between Toro and the river Esla.¹

This formidable concentration of troops to the north of the Douro, in a line at right angles to the position which they had hitherto occupied fronting the English general, rendered the further stay of the French army in the neighbourhood of Valladolid impossible, and a hasty ill-arranged retreat was commenced to the Upper Ebro. Valladolid, with considerable stores of ammunition, was occupied on the 4th. On the 7th and 8th the British army, rapidly pursuing, crossed the Carrion at various

points ; and pressing forward with conquering violence, and in the highest spirits at seeing the enemy thus receding before them, soon arrived at the scenes which they had passed under such disastrous circumstances, at the commencement of the retreat from Burgos, in the close of the preceding campaign. Joseph at first thought he should be in a condition to give the enemy battle on the elevated plateau around that stronghold, and he had now assembled fifty-five thousand men, including nine thousand excellent horse, and a hundred guns. But the force of the inundation was too great to be thus stopped : a hundred thousand men were on his front and flank ; for the guerillas of Navarre and Biscay had now drawn together in the vicinity of the British army, and rumour, as usual exaggerating the danger, had magnified their amount to a hundred and ninety thousand combatants. The French retreat, therefore, was continued without intermission to the Ebro. The castle of Burgos, the theatre of such desperate strife in the former campaign, was blown up with a frightful explosion, and with such precipitation that three hundred French soldiers, defiling under its walls at the time, were crushed by the falling ruins. Scarcely noticing this disaster in the general wreck of the empire, the enemy, in deep depression, continued their retreat towards VITORIA. With mingled astonishment and exultation, the Allied troops triumphantly marched through the scenes of their former struggles and defeat. “ Clausel’s strong position, Dubreton’s thundering castle, had disappeared like a dream ; and sixty thousand veteran soldiers, willing to fight at every step, were hurried, with all the tumult and confusion of retreat, across the Ebro.”¹

On abandoning Burgos, Joseph took the road for Vitoria, by Pancorvo and Miranda del Ebro. But the consequences of this precipitate retreat now became painfully apparent ; and it was evident to the whole army, that it would be impossible, when pressed by a victorious

CHAP.
LXXXVI.
1813.

June 14.

¹ Nap. v.
537, 541.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
245. Wel-
lington to
Lord Ba-
thurst, June
13, 1813.
Gurw. x.
435. Tor. v.
261, 262.

71.
Confusion
and dis-
tresses of
the French
retreat.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

¹ Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
245. Tor. v.
264, 265,
267. Napier,
v. 388, 541.
Gurw. 444.

72.
March of
the Allies to
Vitoria.

enemy in rear, to engage the troops in the defiles of the Pyrenees, encumbered as they were with baggage, and the spoil, not of a province but a kingdom. Under the terror produced by this unlooked-for and overwhelming force suddenly thrown on their line of communication with France, the whole French troops and civil authorities had evacuated Madrid, and taken refuge under shelter of the army; and the road from that capital to Bayonne was encumbered with an endless file of chariots, carriages, and waggons, which bore away the helpless multitude and rich stores of spoil towards the frontier. The French army, thus encumbered, exhibited a lively image of those hosts which the luxury of Asiatic warfare has in every age accumulated round the standards of their sultans; for the riches which they carried with them were such as bespoke the regal state of a great monarchy; and the train of civil functionaries, officers of state, and ladies of pleasure, who followed the troops, recalled rather the effeminacy of oriental magnificence, than the simple but iron bands of European warfare.¹

The secret of the astonishing success of Wellington's march consisted in his always keeping his left wing in advance, and by that means continually pressing round the right flank of the French. In that way, coupled with a constant pressure in front, he compelled them to evacuate every successive position, how strong soever, which they took up between Burgos and the Ebro. The British troops, in pursuing a triumphant advance through this rocky and mountainous country, were never weary of expressing their astonishment at the prodigious strength of the positions which were abandoned, and the numerous rocky defiles traversed only by single arches, which retarded but by a few hours the advance of the Allied army. They were ignorant of the simultaneous pressure round the right wing of the French, which was going forward from the advance of Graham with the British left wing, and that the most alarming accounts were con-

stantly received at the French headquarters of the progress of the Allied troops in that direction. On the 13th, Graham pursued his indefatigable march through the hills at the sources of the Ebro, and on the 14th passed that river at the bridge of Rocamunde and San Martin; the centre followed the next day, whilst the right wing, under Hill, crossed at the Puente Avenos lower down. At the same time, the Spanish guerillas from Biscay crowded in great numbers to the same quarter, and occupied all the passes in the great mountains of Reynosa, which lie between the Ebro and the sea-coast. The effects of this decisive manœuvre were, that not only was the French main army obliged to abandon all the successive positions which it took up on the great road, but the whole sea-coast of Biscay, with the exception of Bilbao and Santona, was evacuated by the enemy; and the British vessels of war, amidst the enthusiastic shouts of the inhabitants, entered all the harbours.¹

CHAP.
LXXXVI.
1813.

¹ Nap. v.
540, 541.
Gurw. x.
444. Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
245, 246.

A depot and hospital station were immediately established at Santander; the whole supplies of the army were directed thither; a new base of operations was established close to the scene of the coming contest; and Portugal, like a heavy tender whose aid was no longer required, was cut away and forgotten. Meanwhile, the sweep of the Allies round the extreme French right was continued with unabated vigour. The whole crest of the mountains, between the Ebro and the sea, was soon in their possession; hill and valley, roaring torrents and dry ravines—every difficulty of an alpine region—all were met and surmounted. At times the strength of a hundred men was required to drag up one piece of artillery; at others, the gun was lowered down a precipice by ropes, or swayed up the rugged goat-paths by the united efforts of men and horses. At length, by incredible efforts, the crest of the mountains was surmounted: joyfully the men descended the sunny vales by the side of the hourly increasing

73.
Extraordi-
nary diffi-
culties of
the march.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

¹ Napier.

² Maxwell's
Wellington,
iii. 116.
Nap. v. 540,
543. Wel-
lington to
Earl Bathurst, June
19, June
22, 1813.
Gurw. x.
444, 446.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
245, 246.

74.

Beauty of
the scenery
through
which the
army pass-
ed.

waters : soon "the scarlet uniforms were to be seen in every valley ; and the stream of war, descending with impetuous force down all the clefts of the mountains, burst in a hundred foaming torrents into the basin of Vitoria."¹ With such accuracy were the marches of all the columns calculated, and with such precision were they carried into effect by the admirable troops, inured to war and its fatigues, which Wellington now commanded, that everything happened exactly as he had arranged before he set out from Portugal. The troops all arrived at the stations assigned them, in the prophetic contemplation of their chief, in the neighbourhood of Vitoria, at the very time when the French army, heavy-laden and dejected, had accumulated its immense files of chariots and baggage-waggons, under the charge of seventy thousand men, in the plain in front of that town.²

No words can do justice to the exquisite beauty of the scenery through which the British troops, especially those on the left wing, passed during this memorable march. The enchanting features of the romantic valleys of the mountain region whence the Ebro draws its waters, which at every season excite the admiration of the passing traveller, were at that time singularly enhanced by the exquisite verdure of the opening spring, and the luxuriance of the foliage which in every sheltered nook clothed the mountain sides. War appeared in these sequestered and pastoral valleys, not in its rude and bloody garb, but in its most brilliant and attractive costume ; the pomp of the melodrama, the charms of the opera, seemed realised in the most ravishing scenes of nature. The animating strains of military music, as the troops wended their way through the valleys, blended with the shepherd's pipe on the hills above ; while the numerous trains of horse, foot, and cannon, winding in every direction through the defiles, gave an inexpressible variety and charm to the landscape. At one time the columns moved through luxuriant valleys, intersprinkled with hamlets, vineyards, and flower-

gardens ; at another they struggled up mountain ridges, or pressed through alpine passes overhung with beetling cliffs, making it almost difficult to decide whether the rugged chasm which they followed had been rifted from the hillside by an earthquake, or cut out by human hands. Beneath lay sparkling rivers and sunny dells ; above rose naked rocks and splintered peaks ; while moving bands of glittering troops, horse, foot, and cannon, in all the pride of war, now lost, now seen amid the windings of the route, gave inexpressible interest to the scene. Even the common soldiers were not insensible to the beauty of the spectacle thus perpetually placed before their eyes. Often the men rested on their muskets with their arms crossed, gazing on the lovely scenes which lay spread far beneath their feet ; and more than once the heads of the columns involuntarily halted to satiate their eyes with a spectacle of beauty, the like of which all felt they might never see again.¹

CHAP.
LXXVI.
1813.

¹ Recollections of the Peninsula, 173, 176, and personal knowledge. Maxwell's Wellington, iii. 117.

The immense baggage trains of Joseph's army had now fallen back into the basin of Vitoria ; and seventy thousand men were assembled to protect their retreat into France. But it seemed hardly possible that even that large force could secure the safe transit of such an enormous multitude of carriages ; and yet how could they be abandoned without confessing defeat, and relinquishing at the same time the whole ammunition waggons and military stores of the army ? The rapacity of the French authorities in Spain ; the general spoliation which, from the marshals downwards, they had exercised under the imperial orders in every part of the country, now fell with just but terrible force upon them. Their gallant army was about to be overwhelmed by the immensity of its spoil. In retreating through Madrid and the two Castiles, the French authorities had levied contributions surpassing all the former ones in severity and magnitude ; and the enormous sums raised in this way, amounting to five millions and a half of dollars, were all existing in

75.
Accumulation of Joseph's army and baggage in the basin of Vitoria.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

¹ Tor. v.
262, 270.
Maxwell,
iii. 118, 120.

hard cash, and constituted no inconsiderable part of the weight with which the army was encumbered. Not content with these pecuniary exactions, both Joseph and his generals had faithfully followed the example set them by the Emperor, in collecting and bringing off all the most precious works of art which adorned the Spanish capital and provinces. All the marshals, from Murat, who commenced the pillage in 1808, had gratified themselves, by seizing upon the finest paintings which were to be found in convents or private palaces in every part of the country ; and Marshal Soult, in particular, had from the rich spoils of the Andalusian convents, formed the noble collection of paintings by Murillo and Velasquez, which now adorns his hotel at Paris.¹

76.
Which was
augmented
by the spoil
of Madrid,
and the pay
of the troops
sent from
France.

But when Joseph and his whole civil functionaries came to break up finally from Madrid, the work of spoliation went on upon a greater scale, and extended to every object of interest, whether from beauty, rarity, or antiquity, which was to be found in the royal palaces or museums. Many of the finest works of Titian, Raphael, and Corregio, were got hold of in this manner, especially from the Escorial and the royal palace at Madrid ; while all the archives and museums in the capital and in Old Castile, had been compelled to yield up their most precious contents to accompany the footsteps of the fugitive monarch. Nor was this all : the retreating army met at Vitoria a train with the pay which, by great efforts, Napoleon had collected in France for his Peninsular troops, amounting to two years' arrears, which was all existing in hard cash in the military chest of the army.* All this precious spoil was dragged along in endless convoy in the rear of the French army ; and when it halted and faced about in the basin of Vitoria,² it was rather from a sense of the evident impossibility of transporting the prodigious

² Tor. v.
262, 272.

* I had this remarkable fact from Sir George Murray, then quartermaster-general to Wellington, to whose talents and exertions so much of the great leader's success was owing.

mass in safety through the approaching defiles of the Pyrenees, than from any well-founded hope of being able to resist the shock of the Anglo-Portuguese army.

The basin of Vitoria, which has become immortal from the battle, decisive of the fate of the Peninsula, which was fought within its bosom, is a small plain, about eight miles in length by six in breadth, situated in an elevated plateau among the mountains. It is bounded on the north and east by the commencement of the Pyrenean range, and on the west by a chain of rugged mountains, which separates the province of Alava from that of Biscay. A traveller entering the valley from the side of Miranda del Ebro, by the great road from Madrid, emerges into the plain by the pass of Puebla, where the Zadorra forces its way through a narrow cleft in the mountain, in its descent to the Ebro, and from whence the spires of Vitoria, situated at the extremity of the plain, are visible about eight miles distant. This little plain is intersected by two ranges of hills, which cross it nearly from east to west, and afforded two very strong positions, where the French army endeavoured to stop the advance of the Allies; the first being on either side of Ariñiz, and the second, which was much stronger ground, around Gomecha. Several roads from the mountains on all sides intersect each other at Vitoria, particularly those to Pampeluna, Bilbao, and Galicia; but although they are all practicable for guns, yet that which leads direct to San Sebastian and Bayonne, through Gamarra Mayor, was alone adequate to receive the vast trains of carriages which were heaped up in and around that town. Two great convoys had already departed by this road, and were now far advanced on the way to France; but a still greater quantity, including the whole imperial and royal treasure, and all the guns and ammunition of the army, remained.¹ It was, therefore, of the highest importance to the French at all hazards to keep possession of the great road to Bayonne, and, above all, not to suffer Gamarra Mayor

CHAP.
LXXXVI.
1813.

77.
Description
of the basin
of Vitoria,
and the field
of battle.

Atlas,
Plate 81.

¹ Nap. v.
548, 549.
Tor. v. 274.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
246, 247.
Maxwell's
Wellington,
iii. 123, 124.

CHAP.
LXXXVI.

1813.

78.
Forces of
the armies
on the op-
posite sides.

to fall into the hands of the enemy ; while the bulk of the army on the broken ground, in the middle of the plain of Vitoria, endeavoured to arrest the advance of the Allied force.

The departure of the two heavy-laden convoys for France, sensibly diminished the strength of Joseph's army ; for they required to be guarded by strong escorts to prevent them falling into the hands of the Biscay guerillas. The guard attending the last, consisted of no less than three thousand troops under General Maucune. After this large reduction, however, the French army amounted to above seventy thousand men, of whom sixty-five thousand were effective combatants, and they had one hundred and fifty pieces of cannon. On Wellington's side there were only sixty thousand English and Portuguese sabres and bayonets in the field ; for the sixth division, six thousand five hundred strong, had been left at Medina de Pomar ; and some stragglers had necessarily fallen behind during so long and fatiguing a march as that which they had made from the Portuguese frontier. But in addition to this force, there were fully eighteen thousand Spaniards, so that the total force was nearly eighty thousand, with ninety guns. The strength of the French position consisted chiefly in the great number of bridges which the Allied forces had to pass, over the numerous mountain streams which descend into the basin of Vitoria ; some of which, particularly that of Puebla and Nanclares, to the south-west of Vitoria, and that of Gamarra Mayor and Arriaga, to the north of that town, were of great strength, and easily susceptible of defence. The ridges, too, which cross the plain, afforded successive defensible positions, the last of which was close to the town of Vitoria. On the other hand, the weakness of their situation consisted in the single line of retreat passable for the carriages of the army, which was kept open for them in case of disaster ;¹ and the appalling dangers which awaited them if their army in the plain met with a serious reverse,

¹ Nap. v.
500, 555.
Wellington
to Lord
Bathurst,
June 22,
1813. Gur.
x. 466.

and either lost the command of the great road to Bayonne, or was driven, with its immense files of ammunition and baggage-waggon, into the rough mountain road leading to Pampeluna.

CHAP.
LXXXVI.
1813.

Having anxiously surveyed the enemy's position on the afternoon of the 20th, and perceiving that they stood firm, and were making preparations for battle, Wellington, on his side, made his dispositions for an attack. Hill, with twenty thousand men, was to move with the right wing at daybreak, into the great road to Vitoria, in the neighbourhood of Puebla, and advancing through the defile, which was not occupied in strength by the enemy, expand his force as he arrived in the open plain; Murillo, with his division of Spaniards, keeping on his right, on the heights between the great road and the hills. The right-centre, under Wellington in person, consisting of the light and fourth divisions, with Ponsonby's cavalry and the dragoon guards, were to proceed through the pass which leads to Subijana-de-Morillos, and, crossing the ridges which formed the southern boundary of the basin of Vitoria, move straight forward to their respective points of attack on the Zadorra, especially the bridges of Villodar, Tres Puentes, and Nanclores. The left-centre, comprising the third and seventh divisions, was to move by the village of Gueta and the bridge of Mendoza, direct upon the steeples of Vitoria; Sir Thomas Graham was directed to make a circuit from Murguia on the left, with the first and fifth divisions, Longa's Spaniards, and Anson's and Bock's cavalry, in all about twenty thousand men, by the Bilbao road, so as to fall on the extreme French right under Reille, if possible force the bridge of the Zadorra at Gamarra Mayor, and thus intercept the line of retreat for the army by the great road to Bayonne.¹ The effect of these dispositions, if simultaneously and successfully carried into execution, obviously would be to cut off the retreat of the French army by the only line practicable for their numerous

79.
British plan
of attack.

¹ Murray's
Instructions
in Wyld's
Memoirs,
100, 102.
Nap. v. 554,
555. Wel-
lington to
Lord Ba-
thurst, June
22, 1813.
Gurw. x.
446.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

80.
French posi-
tion and
order of
battle.

carriages, at the very time that they were hard pressed by the main body of the Allies in front, and thus expose them to total ruin.

The French order of battle, hastily taken up, without any master-mind to direct it, was much less ably conceived, and bore the mark rather of the hurried defensive arrangement of several independent corps suddenly and unexpectedly assailed by superior forces, than the deliberate marshalling of a great army about to contend with a worthy antagonist for the dominion of the Peninsula. The right, which was opposed to Graham, occupied the heights in front of the Zadorra, above the village of Abechicho, and covered Vitoria from approach by the Bilbao road; the centre extended along the left bank of the same river, commanding and blocking up the great road from Madrid; the left, behind the Zadorra, stretched from Arriñiz to Puebla de Arlanzon, and fronted the defile of Puebla, by which Sir Rowland Hill was to issue to the fight. A detached corps, under Clausel, was placed at Logrono, to secure the road to Pampeluna, on which it was already feared the troops would mainly have to depend for their retreat; and Foy had been stationed in the valley of Senorio, towards Bilbao, to protect them from the incursions of Longa and the Biscay guerillas, and keep open the communications of the army in that direction. These two detachments weakened the disposable force of the French, on which reliance could be placed for the shock of battle, by more than twenty thousand men; so that not more than fifty-five thousand men could be calculated upon for the fight. But they were all veteran soldiers; they occupied a central position, so that their columns, if hard pressed, could mutually support each other; and they had a hundred and fifty pieces of cannon. On the other hand, their position, if they were worsted, was in the highest degree perilous; for the mountain road to Pampeluna was impracticable for the multitude of carriages which thronged the plain;¹

¹ Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
246, 247.
Jom. iv.
348, 349.
Belm. i.
254.

and it was easy to see that, if the centre of the army, which covered the great road from Madrid, was forced, its whole artillery and equipage would be lost.

CHAP.
LXXVI.
1813.

At daybreak on the morning of the 21st, the whole British columns were in motion; the centre and right soon surmounted the high ground which screened their night-bivouac from the sight of the enemy, and their masses appeared in imposing strength on the summit of the ridges which shut in on the south the basin of Vitoria. The column on the left moved towards Mendoza, while Hill, at ten o'clock, reached the pass of Puebla, into which he immediately descended, and, pressing through, began to extend into the plain in his front; Murillo's Spaniards, with surprising vigour, swarming up the steep and rocky ascents on his right. There, however, the French made a stout resistance; the Spanish general was wounded, but still kept the field: fresh troops reinforced the line of the enemy on the craggy heights, so that Hill was obliged to send the 71st, and a battalion of light infantry of Walker's brigade, to Murillo's support, under Colonel Cadogan. Hardly had he reached the summit, when that noble officer fell while cheering on his men to charge the enemy; though mortally wounded, he refused to be taken to the rear, and still rested on the field, watching with dying eyes the advance of his heroic Highlanders along the ridge.* Still the battle was maintained with extraordinary resolution on the summit, and it was only by sending up fresh troops, and step by step, by force of sheer fighting, that the French were at length borne backwards to nearly opposite Subijana; while Hill, in the valley below, encouraged by the progress of the scarlet uniforms on the summit on his right, pressed vigorously forward,¹ and, emerging from the defile

81.
Battle of
Vitoria.
Success of
Hill on the
right.
June 21.

¹ Nap. v.
554, 555.
Vict. et
Conq. 242,
243. Wel-
lington to
Lord Ba-
thurst, June
22, 1813.
Gur. x. 447.
Gazan's
Official
Account,
Wyl'd's
Mem. 101

* The evening before the battle, when assured it would take place, the exultation of this gallant officer was unbounded: going into battle at the head of that noble brigade appeared the summit of his ambition. Before the conflict ended he was no more.—MAXWELL, iii. 136.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

82.
Progress of
Wellington
in the
centre.

of Puebla, carried by storm the village of Subijana, and extended his line into communication with his extreme right on the summit of the ridge.

While this bloody conflict was going on upon the steeps above the Zadorra on the right, Wellington himself, with the centre, had surmounted the heights in his front, and descended in great strength into the plain of Vitoria. His troops met with no serious opposition till they came to the bridges by which the streams in the bottom were crossed. But as these were all occupied by the enemy, and the rocky thickets on their sides filled with tirailleurs, a warm exchange of musketry began, especially at the bridge of Nanclares, opposite the fourth division, and that of Villodar, by which the light division was to cross. The attack on these bridges was delayed till the third and seventh divisions, who formed the left-centre, had come up to their ground; and they were somewhat retarded by the roughness of the hills over which they had to march. Upon observing this, Wellington sent orders to Hill to arrest the progress of his extreme right on the summit of the ridge, in order that the whole army might advance abreast. At this moment a Spanish peasant brought information that the bridge of Tres Puentes was negligently guarded, and offered himself to guide the light division over it; and the heads of the columns of the third and seventh divisions, forming the left-centre, having now appeared on their ground, the advance was resumed at all points, both in the centre and on the right. Kempt's brigade of the light division, led by the brave peasant, soon gained the bridge; the 15th hussars, coming up at a canter, dashed over by single file, and the arch was won. It was now one o'clock: the firing was renewed with redoubled vigour on the heights above Subijana; while faint columns of white smoke, accompanied by a sound like distant thunder, far to the northward, showed that Graham's attack on Gamarra Mayor, in the enemy's rear, had commenced. Meanwhile the third and seventh

divisions were moving rapidly down to the bridge of Mendoza ; but the enemy's light troops and guns kept up a most vigorous fire upon the advancing masses, until the riflemen of the light division, who had got across at Tres Puentes, charged them in flank. Upon this the position was abandoned, and the British left and right centre crossed without further opposition. The whole French centre, alarmed by the progress which Graham was making in their rear, now retreated towards Vitoria ; not, however, in disorder, but facing about at every defensible position to retard the enemy ; while the British troops continued to advance in pursuit in admirable order, their regiments and squadrons surmounting the rugged inequalities in the ground with the most beautiful precision.¹

CHAP.
LXXXVI.
1813.

¹ Wellington to Lord Bathurst, June 22, 1813. Gur. x. 448. Gazan's Official Account, Wyld, 102. Vict. et Conq. xxii. 213. Nap. v. 557, 559. Maxwell, iii. 137, 138.

The decisive blow, however, had meanwhile been struck by Graham on the left. That noble officer, who, at the age of sixty-eight, possessed all the vigour of twenty-five, and who was gifted with the true eye of a general, had started before daylight from his bivouac in the mountains on the left, and, by eleven o'clock, after a most fatiguing and toilsome march over the hills, reached the heights above Gamarra Mayor and Arriaga, which were strongly occupied by the French right under Reille. General Oswald, who led the head of Graham's corps, consisting of the fifth division, Pack's Portuguese, and Longa's Spaniards, immediately commenced the attack, and not only drove the enemy from the heights, but got possession of Gamarra Menor, which cut off the road to Durango. Gamarra Mayor was the next object of attack ; and the French, aware of its importance, as commanding the great road to Bayonne, made the most strenuous, and for long successful, efforts for its defence. At length Robinson's brigade of the fifth division burst in, bearing down all opposition, and capturing three guns ; but Reille's men had barricaded the opposite end of the bridge, and their fire from the windows of the houses was

83.
Decisive success of Graham on the left.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

¹ Vict. et
Cong. xxii.
248, 249.
Nap. v. 364,
365. Wel-
lington to
Lord Ba-
thurst, June
22, 1813.
Gurw. x.
449. Belm.
i. 254.

so severe, that they retained the opposite bank of the Zadorra. At the same time, the Germans under Halket had, in the most gallant manner, assaulted the village of Abechuchio, which commanded the bridge of Arriaga. It was at length carried by the brave Germans and Bradford's Portuguese; but they were unable, any more than at Gamarra Mayor, to force the bridge, and a murderous fire of musketry was kept up from the opposite sides, without enabling either party to dislodge the other from its position. But meanwhile General Sarrut was killed; some British brigades pushing on, got possession of the great road from Vitoria to Bayonne, and immediately the cry spread through the French army that their retreat was cut off, and all was lost.¹

84.
Retreat of
the French
to Vitoria,
and their
total defeat.

It was no longer a battle, but a retreat; yet in conducting it the French soldiers maintained the high character for intrepidity and steadiness which had rendered them the terror and admiration of Europe. A large body of skirmishers was thrown out to check the advance of the pursuing columns; and fifty guns, placed in the rear, which were worked with extraordinary vigour, retarded for some time the pursuit of the British centre. Wellington, however, brought up several British batteries, and the enemy were at length forced back to the ridge in front of Gomecha. An obstinate conflict took place in Ariñiz, into which Picton plunged at the head of the riflemen and a brigade of his own division; but at length the village was carried; the 87th, under Colonel Gough,* stormed Hermandad; the 52d won Margarita; and the French in Subijana, finding their right forced back, were obliged to retreat two miles towards Vitoria in a disordered mass. Thus the action became a sort of running fight or cannonade, which continued for six miles;² but the enemy, notwithstanding all their efforts, were unable to hold any position long enough to enable

² Gurw. x.
449, 450.
Nap. v. 561.
Vict. et
Cong. xxii.
249.

* Now Lord Gough, so celebrated for his successful campaigns against the Chinese before Nankin in 1842, and the Sikhs on the Sutlej in 1846 and 1849.

the carriages in the rear to draw off ; and as they were all thrown back into the little plain in front of Vitoria, the throng there became excessive ; and already the cries of despair, as on the banks of the Beresina, were heard from the agitated multitude.

The sun was setting, and his last rays fell upon a matchless spectacle. Masses of red infantry were seen advancing steadily across the plain : the horse-artillery in front thundered on the flying throng : through every opening, glittering squadrons of cavalry, their sabres and helmets flashing in the level rays, poured on in close pursuit. Joseph now ordered the retreat to be conducted by the only road which remained open, that to Pampe-luna ; but it was too late to draw off any of the carriages ; “and as the English shot went booming overhead,” says an eye-witness, “the vast crowd started and swerved with a convulsive movement, while a dull and horrid sound of distress arose ; but there was no hope, no stay for either army or multitude.”¹ Eighty pieces

CHAP.
LXXXVI.
1813.

85.
Splendid
spectacle at
the close of
the battle.

¹ Napier.

² Nap. v.
561, 562.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
249. Jom.
iv. 350.
Wellington
to Lord
Bathurst,
June 22,
1813. Gur.
x. 446, 450.
Maxwell,
iii. 138.

prey to the victors.²
Never before, in modern times, had such a prodigious accumulation of military stores and private wealth fallen to the lot of a victorious army. Jourdan's marshal's baton, Joseph's private carriage and sword of

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

86.

Results of
the battle,
and pro-
digious
amount of
the spoil
taken.

state, a hundred and fifty-one brass guns, four hundred and fifteen caissons of ammunition, thirteen hundred thousand ball-cartridges, fourteen thousand rounds of ammunition, and forty thousand pounds of gunpowder, constituted the military trophies of a victory, where six thousand also were killed and wounded, and a thousand prisoners taken. It at one blow destroyed the warlike efficiency of the French army, swept them like a whirlwind from the Spanish plains, and made Joseph's crown fall from his head. No estimate can be formed of the amount of private plunder which was taken on the field, but it exceeded anything witnessed in modern war; for it was not the produce of the sack of a city or the devastation of a province, but the accumulated plunder of a kingdom during five years, joined to the arrears of pay of the invader's host for two, which was now at one fell swoop reft from the spoiler. Independent of private booty, no less than five millions and a half of dollars in the military chest of the army were taken; and of private wealth the amount was so prodigious, that for miles together the pursuers may be almost said to have marched upon gold and silver without stooping to pick it up. But the regiments which followed, not equally warmed in the fight, were not so disinterested. Enormous spoil fell into the hands of the private soldiers; and the cloud of camp followers and sutlers who followed in their train swept the ground so completely, that only a hundred thousand dollars of the whole taken was brought into the military chest! But the effects of this prodigious booty speedily appeared in the dissolution of the bonds of discipline in a large part of the army. The frightful national vice of intemperance broke out in dreadful colours, from the unbounded means of indulging it which were thus speedily acquired; and we have the authority of Wellington for the assertion, that three weeks after the battle, though the total loss of the combatants was only five thousand one hundred and eighty,¹

¹ Wellington to Lord Bathurst, June 22, 1813. *Gur.* x. 452, 453; and July 9, 1813. *Ibid.* 519; and June 29, 1813, 472. *Vict. et Conq.* xxii. 252.

above twelve thousand soldiers had disappeared from their colours. Of this immense body three thousand three hundred and eighty were British; and these stragglers were only reclaimed by sedulous efforts and rigorous severity.*

CHAP.
LXXXVI.
1813.

So vast was the number of ladies of pleasure who were among the carriages in the train of the French officers, that it was a common saying afterwards in their army, that it was no wonder they were beaten at Vitoria, for they sacrificed their guns to save their mistresses. Wives and concubines, nuns and actresses arrayed in the highest luxury and fashion, were taken by hundreds. Rich vestures of all sorts; velvet and silk brocades, gold and silver plate, noble pictures, jewels, laces, cases of claret and champagne, poodles, parrots, monkeys, and trinkets, lay scattered about the field in endless confusion, amidst weeping mothers, wailing infants, and all the unutterable miseries of warlike overthrow. Joseph himself narrowly escaped being made a prisoner: a squadron of dragoons pursued the carriage and fired into it, and he had barely time to throw himself out and escape on horseback under shelter of a troop of horse.

87.
Booty and
captives
taken.

* "We started with the army in the highest order, and up to the day of the battle nothing could get on better; but that event has, as usual, totally annihilated all order and discipline. The soldiers of the army have got among them about a million sterling in money, with the exception of about 100,000 dollars which were got in the military chest. The night of the battle, instead of being passed in getting rest and food, to prepare them for the pursuit of the following day, was passed by the soldiers in looking for plunder. The consequence was, that they were incapable of marching in pursuit of the enemy, and were totally knocked up. The rain came on, and increased our fatigues; and I am convinced that we have now out of our ranks double the amount of our loss in the battle, and have lost more men in the pursuit than the enemy have, though we have never in one day made more than an ordinary march."—WELLINGTON to LORD BATHURST, 29th June 1813; GURWOOD, x. 473.

"By the state of yesterday we had 12,500 men less under arms than we had on the day before the battle. They are not in the hospital, nor are they killed, nor have they fallen into the hands of the enemy as prisoners; I have had officers in all directions after them, but have not heard of any of them. I believe they are concealed in the villages in the mountains."—WELLINGTON to LORD BATHURST, 9th July 1813; GURWOOD, x. 519. The loss in the battle was just 5000; so that 7500 had straggled, from the effects of the plunder.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

His travelling carriage was taken, and in it a number of most valuable pictures, cut out of their frames and rolled up, among which was the beautiful Corregio of Christ in the Garden, which now adorns Apsley House in London. The great convoy of pictures, however, which Joseph was carrying off, after narrowly escaping recapture, reached France in safety, having set out a day previously. The bonds contracted during so many years' occupation of the Peninsula, many of them of the tenderest kind, were all at once snapped asunder by one rude shock; and amidst the shouts of joy which arose on all sides for a delivered monarchy, were heard the sighs of the vanquished, who mourned the severance of the closest ties by which the heart of man can be bound in this world.¹

¹ Southey, vi. 173. *Vict. et Cong.* xxii. 250. *Tor.* v. 280, 281.

88.
Wellington's generous conduct to the captured ladies.

Wellington and the British officers, in a worthy spirit, did all in their power to soften the blow to the many ladies of rank and respectability who fell into his hands. The Countess Gazan, with a number of other wives of the French officers, were next day sent on to Pampeluna with a flag of truce, in their own carriages, which had been rescued from the spoil. A most important mass of documents was obtained in the whole archives of the court of Madrid, including a great part of Napoleon's original and secret correspondence—an invaluable acquisition to historic truth, to which this narrative has been more than once largely indebted. It is a remarkable fact that the battle was fought in the close vicinity of the spot where the gallant attempt of the Black Prince to establish the rightful though savage monarch, Peter the Cruel, on the throne of Spain, five hundred years before, had been victorious; and, when pursuing the French troops near Ariñiz, over the hill which still bears the name of the "English hill," (*Inglesmendi*), the English soldiers unconsciously trode on the bones of their fathers! Twice has the fate of Spain been decided, by the shedding of British blood, in the plain of Vitoria.²

² *Tor.* v. 280, 281. *Vict. et Cong.* xxii. 250, 251. Southey, vi. 173. Maxwell, iii. 122, 143.

The battle of Vitoria resounded like a thunder-clap in every part of Spain ; Madrid was finally evacuated on the 27th, and the whole French authorities and partisans of the dethroned monarch, abandoning every part of Old and New Castile, made all imaginable haste to cross the Ebro. Suchet, who, notwithstanding his defeat at Castalla and the subsequent operations of Sir John Murray, of which an account will subsequently be given, still retained his intrenched position on the Xucar, was compelled with a heavy heart to abandon the beautiful kingdom of Valencia, and all his magnificent establishments there, in which he had ruled for eighteen months with the authority and state of a sovereign. Leaving garrisons only in Saguntum and Peniscola, he retired with all his army across the Ebro, where he distributed his forces between Tarragona and Tortosa. Elio immediately moved forward and occupied Valencia. The total evacuation of all Spain south of the Ebro by the French troops, necessarily rendered defenceless that very considerable portion, especially of the higher classes, in its central provinces, who had adhered to the fortunes of the French dynasty, and were known in the Peninsula by the contemptuous name of *juramentados*. There was every reason to fear that the Cortes, having them now in their power, would hasten to gratify alike their long-cherished indignation, and their present appetite for gain, by condemning a large portion of them to the scaffold, and confiscating their estates. To guard against this danger, Wellington, amidst his martial toils, addressed to the Cortes a long and able memoir, enforcing the propriety of granting, with a few exceptions, a general amnesty to those of the opposite party. He supported the humane advice by a detail of the various circumstances which had so long rendered the contest to all appearance hopeless, and thereby extenuated, if they could not altogether excuse, their adherence to the intrusive monarch.¹ The principles contained in this memoir, discriminating,

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

89.

Evacuation
of Madrid
and Valen-
cia by the
French,
who retire
behind the
Ebro.
June 27.

July 5.

July 9.

¹ Wellington to Don Juan O'Donnoju, June 11th, 1813. Gurw. x. 431. Tor. v. 298.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

humane, and politic, will not, by future ages, be deemed the least honourable monument to the fame of Wellington ; and they came with singular grace from a victorious general in the very moment of his highest triumph, when he had rescued the country from the foreign yoke whose partisans he was thus shielding from the natural indignation of their countrymen.*

On the day of the battle, Clausel with his division, fourteen thousand strong, quitted Logrono, and, taking the road to Vitoria, arrived at the gates of that town late at night, after the conflict was over, and when it had fallen into the hands of the British. Fearful of being cut off, he immediately retired, and marching all night, fell back towards Saragossa, but halted at Logrono to receive intelligence, where he remained till the evening of the 25th. This long delay had wellnigh proved fatal to him, and undoubtedly would have done so, if the march of the British, immediately after the battle, had not been retarded by the heavy rains which fell for two days, and the relaxation of discipline occasioned by the prodigious spoil they had taken. No sooner was Wellington informed of Clausel's position than he marched in person, with eighteen thousand men, by Tafalla upon Logrono ; while twelve

90.
Imminent
danger and
narrow
escape of
Clausel.

Atlas,
Plate 48.

* "I am the last person who will be found to diminish the merit of the Spaniards who have adhered to the cause of the country during the severe trial which I hope has passed, particularly of those who, having remained among the enemy without entering their service, have served their country at the risk of their lives. But at the same time that I can appreciate the merit of those individuals, and of the nation at large, I can forgive the weakness of those who have been induced by terror, by distress, or by despair, to pursue a different line of conduct.

"I entreat the government to advert to the circumstances of the commencement, and of the different stages of this eventful contest ; and to the numerous occasions on which all men must have imagined that it was impossible for the powers of the Peninsula, although aided by Great Britain, to withstand the colossal power by which they were assailed, and nearly overcome. Let them reflect upon the weakness of the country at the commencement of the contest, upon the numerous and almost invariable disasters of the armies, and upon the ruinous disorganisation which followed ; and let them decide whether those who were witnesses of these events are guilty, because they could not foresee what has since occurred. The majority are certainly not guilty in any other manner : and many, as I have above stated, now deemed guilty in the eye

thousand were directed upon that town from the side of Salvatierra, and Mina followed on the enemy's rear. The French general was made aware of his danger just in time to escape being surrounded; and setting out with all imaginable expedition, he retreated by Calahorra and Tudela upon Saragossa, where he arrived on the 1st July, making a forced march of sixty miles in forty hours. Thence he retreated by Jaca, and through the passes of the Pyrenees into France, closely followed by Mina, who managed the pursuit with such ability, that the French general, though superior in number, was obliged to sacrifice a large portion of his heavy artillery and baggage, before he found a refuge within the French territory.¹

CHAP.
LXXVI.
1813.

¹ Nap. v.
571, 572.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
252. Tor. v.
288, 290.

While Clausel was making this narrow escape from the right wing of the Allied forces, the centre, under Hill, pursued the main body of the routed army, which retired by Pampeluna and up the valley of Roncesvalles into France. They were in the deepest dejection, with only one gun in their whole array, hardly any ammunition, and no baggage, military chest, or papers of any description; insomuch that the whole muster-rolls and pay-sheets of the army were lost, and their organisation, as a military

91.
Operations
against
Pampeluna
and Foy's
division.
July 25.

of the law, as having served the pretended king, have, by that very act, acquired the means of serving, and have rendered important services to their country.

"It is my opinion that the policy of Spain should lead the government and the Cortes to grant a general amnesty, with certain exceptions. This subject deserves consideration in the two views, of the effort now making failing or succeeding in freeing the country from its oppressors. If the effort should fail, the enemy will, by an amnesty, be deprived of the principal means now in his hands of oppressing the country in which his armies will be stationed. He will see clearly that he can place no reliance on any partisans in Spain; and he will not have even a pretence for supposing that country is divided in opinion. If the effort should succeed, as I sincerely hope it may, the object of the government should be to pacify the country, and to heal the divisions which the contest unavoidably must have occasioned. It is impossible that this object can be accomplished as long as there exists a large body of the Spanish nation, some possessing the largest properties in the country, and others endowed with considerable talents, who are proscribed for their conduct during the contest; conduct which has been caused by the misfortunes to which I have above adverted."—WELLINGTON to DON JUAN O'DONOU, *Spanish Minister at War*; GURWOOD, vol. x. p. 431, 432.

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

June 25.

July 1.
¹ Tor. v.
 284, 288.
 Nap. v. 569,
 571. Vict. et
 Conq. xxii.
 252. Wel-
 lington to
 Lord Ba-
 thurst, 3d
 July 1813.
 Gurw. x.
 501.

force, was at an end. The blockade of Pampeluna, into which a garrison of six thousand men had been thrown by the retreating army, was immediately formed by the English general. Meanwhile Graham, with the left wing, moved against Foy, who, with his division, had been in the neighbourhood of Durango during the battle. No sooner did he hear of its disastrous issue, than he set about collecting the small garrisons in Lower Biscay, with a view to a general retreat to San Sebastian. He arrived in Tolosa with twelve thousand men almost at the same time with Sir Thomas Graham; but having succeeded in making his entrance first, he barricaded the streets, and maintained himself there, with the aid of a fortified blockhouse, with great resolution, till nightfall. The entrance was then forced by the British troops, amidst the cheers of the inhabitants, and the enemy retired to Irun with the loss of four hundred men. Graham's loss, however, was nearly as severe; and the vigour of Foy's resistance had gained time for his convoys to retire across the Bidassoa into France, whither he followed a few days afterwards, and Giron had the felicity of chasing the last French in that quarter from the Spanish territory. At the same time, the forts of Passages, with their garrison of a hundred and fifty men, were surrendered to Longa; Castro-Urdiales was evacuated, the garrison taking refuge in Santona; and the Conde d'Abisbal, who had come up with the army of reserve from Andalusia, carried by storm the forts of Pancorvo, garrisoned by seven hundred men, which commanded the great road in the rear between Burgos and Vitoria.¹

92.
 Reflections
 on Wellin-
 gton's glo-
 rious suc-
 cesses.

The campaign of Vitoria is the most glorious, both in a moral and political point of view, which is to be found in the British annals. When we reflect that at its commencement the English forces were still on the Coa and the Agueda, and the French armies occupied more than one-half of Spain, including the whole of its northern

fortresses, and that at its conclusion they had been wholly expelled from Spain, the mountain barrier of the Pyrenees forced, and their troops were found maintaining a painful defensive warfare on the banks of the Adour—it is hard to say whether we have most cause to admire the ability of the chief who, in so short a time, achieved such unparalleled successes—the hardihood of the soldiers who followed him, unwearied, through such toils and dangers, or the strength of the moral reaction which, in so brief a space, produced such astonishing results. They must appear the more wonderful, when it is recollected that, at the commencement of the campaign, the Anglo-Portuguese army could muster only seventy thousand combatants, and the British and Germans in Valencia ten thousand more; that the Spaniards were incapable of being trusted in serious conflict; while the French had one hundred and ninety-seven thousand men present with the eagles, not, as in former campaigns, disseminated over an immense surface from the Pyrenees to Gibraltar, but concentrated in the plains of Old Castile and the north of Spain, and in possession of all its frontier fortresses. In three months, the vast fabric, erected with so much toil and bloodshed during five years of previous warfare, was overthrown; and the French armies, which so long, in the pride of irresistible strength, had oppressed the Peninsula, were driven like chaff before the wind into their own territories. The march from the frontiers of Portugal to the Ebro, with the left constantly in advance, so as to compel the French to evacuate all the defensive positions which they took up; the skill with which the troops were disposed who gained the battle of Vitoria; the vigour and quick determination which won that decisive victory itself, are so many examples of the highest military ability, which never have been surpassed. But it would have been in vain that her chief was endowed with all these rare qualities, if the troops of England which he commanded had not been adequate to the duties to which

CHAP.
LXXVI.

1813.

they were called. Such was the admirable state of discipline and efficiency to which the British and Portuguese soldiers had now arrived, and such the heroic spirit with which they were animated, that it may safely be affirmed they never were surpassed in the annals either of ancient or modern war. *

CHAPTER LXXVII.

CAMPAIGN OF THE PYRENEES.

NOTHING remained to complete the entire expulsion of the French from the north-western provinces of Spain, but to root them out from the fortified strongholds of Santona, Pampeluna, and SAN SEBASTIAN, which were the only fortresses in that quarter that they still held. Pampeluna was already closely invested by Hill; and Graham lost no time in investing San Sebastian, which has acquired such celebrity from the dreadful assaults of which it shortly after became the object. Before, however, the British outposts could reach the town, Foy had succeeded in throwing in considerable reinforcements: and the garrison, swelled by detachments that took refuge there by sea, from Guetaria and other fortified posts on the coast which were abandoned, amounted to three thousand men. They were under the command of Emmanuel Rey, one of those rare characters whose resolution and constancy, unshaken amidst misfortune, are fitted to arrest or stay the fall of empires.

San Sebastian is situated upon the extremity of a low sandy peninsula, which, curved in the form of a horse-shoe, nearly surrounds the bay that forms its harbour, while on the other side it is bounded by the opening into which the Urumea stream empties its waters. Immediately behind the town, at the extremity of the curved peninsula, stands a conical hill four hundred feet high, the

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

1.

Investment
of San Se-
bastian and
Pampeluna.2.
Description
of San Se-
bastian.Atlas,
Plate 83.

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

craggy base of which is washed by the ocean, while its summit is crowned by the old castle of La Mota. The southern face of this hill, which overlooks the town, is separated from it by a range of defensive works covered with batteries; so that the mountain called Monte Orgullo could hold out after the fortress itself was taken. The land front of San Sebastian, stretching across the isthmus, is three hundred and fifty yards broad, and consists of a lofty solid curtain of masonry, with a flat bastion in the centre, covered by a hornwork, having the usual counterscarp, covered way, and glacis. But the flank defences, running along the peninsula and facing the Urumea, consist merely of a simple rampart wall, ill flanked, without either ditch, counterscarp, outwork, or external obstacle of any kind; and this wall, such as it is, is exposed, from its summit to its base, to a fire from the Chofre range of sand-hills to the right of the Urumea, at the distance of from five hundred to a thousand yards. It could not be said, therefore, to be a strong place, and in fact it had no pretensions to rank as more than a third-rate fortress. In addition to this, at the time of the battle of Vitoria, it was nearly dismantled, as many of the guns had been removed to form battering trains, or arm smaller fortified posts on the coast: there were no bombproof casemates nor palisades, the wells were in bad order, and the place was supplied with water by a single aqueduct, which was cut off the moment the investment was formed. The Urumea is fordable for two hours before and after low water, so that troops during that period can approach by the dry sands to the foot of the sea scarp wall of the town. Aware of this circumstance, Marshal Berwick, when he besieged San Sebastian in the last century, threw up batteries on the Chofre sand-hills, to breach the eastern face of the town's sea-wall, while approaches were pushed along the isthmus, to prevent the access to the breach being impeded:¹ and it was in the footsteps of that accom-

¹ Jones's
Sieges, ii.
13, 14. Nap.
v. 65, 67.
Belmas's
Sieges, v.
591, 593.

plished commander that the British engineers now prepared to tread.

CHAP.
LXXXVII.

1813.

3.

Commence-
ment of the
siege by Sir
T. Graham.
and defen-
sive mea-
sures of the
governor.

The population of San Sebastian, which usually does not exceed eight thousand souls, had been more than doubled by the influx of Spanish families, most of them persons of consideration and station, who had taken office under Joseph's government, and fled there after the wreck of Vitoria, as the only stronghold which still held out for the intrusive monarch in the northern provinces. The governor being made aware at the same time by General Foy, that he was about to retire into France, and that San Sebastian must look to its own resources, was grievously oppressed by this load of useless mouths, who yet were of such a station that he could neither render them serviceable nor treat them with severity. He used, therefore, all his influence to get them to depart for France, which by land and sea was immediately accomplished. Delivered of this extraneous load, it was the first care of the French governor to occupy the convent of St Bartholomew, which is situated at the end of the isthmus, opposite to the land face of the fortress, in order to destroy all the buildings in it which might furnish a shelter to the besiegers. Fortifications were commenced at that point, in order to render it an outwork that might retard the enemy; the wooden bridge over the Urumea, which connected the town with its eastern shore, was burned; several houses in the suburbs were destroyed, to make room for the firing of the batteries; the wells were cleared out; palisades were hastily run up in front of the outworks; and every preparation was made for a vigorous defence. At the same time all the women and children were ordered instantly to leave the place. But the British, on their side, were not idle. Graham rapidly approached with a besieging force about ten thousand strong; and as the Spanish troops were repulsed in an attack on the convent of St Bartholomew, advances were begun against the town in form. Meanwhile the garrison

June 28.

June 29.

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

¹ Belm. iv.
695, 704.
Jones's
Sieges, ii.
14, 19. Nap.
vi. 68, 71.

were reinforced by troops from Guetaria, who arrived by sea during the night ; and they succeeded in mounting seventy-six heavy guns upon the ramparts, the greater part of which were on the face fronting the peninsula. The approaches, however, against the convent of St Bartholomew were vigorously carried on ; and Wellington, having visited the works, gave his sanction to the advice of Major Smith, the chief of the engineers before Sir R. Fletcher arrived, that that outpost should first be stormed, and the main attack then directed against the eastern face of the sea-wall of the town, which fronted the Urumea, as had been done a century before by Marshal Berwick.¹

4.
Storming
of St Bar-
tholomew.

The breaching batteries against the convent of St Bartholomew were begun on the night of the 10th ; and on the night of the 13th twenty guns of heavy calibre opened their fire. On the forenoon of the 17th, the convent, being nearly laid in ruins, was attacked by a part of the 9th British and three companies of the Royals, under the command of Colonel Cameron, and detachments of the Portuguese. The assault of this isolated and elevated stronghold presented an animating spectacle, for it lay exposed to the guns both of the besiegers and of the fortress ; and between the two sides sixty pieces of heavy cannon directed their fire upon the assailants or the convent, during the time the attack was going on. After a gallant resistance, however, the place was carried, amid loud cheers from the British troops who watched the contest from the opposite shore. But the assailants, carried away by their ardour, pursued the fugitives into the fortress, and thus sustaining some loss from the fire of the ramparts, were glad to seek shelter among the ruined walls of the building.²

² Jones's
Sieges, ii.
28, 29.
Belm. iv.
618, 619.
Nap. vi. 25,
26.

No sooner was this advanced post gained, than the British established batteries on the height where the convent was placed, to annoy the enemy by a fire from that side ; and meanwhile the main batteries were

erected on the Chofre sand-hills, on the right bank of the Urumea. The approaches were pushed with great activity on that side, and speedily armed with heavy cannon landed from the ships; and on the night of the 20th July, the breaching batteries commenced their fire at the distance of about eight hundred yards; while a more distant redoubt on the Monte Olia sent its plunging shot across the Urumea, a distance of fifteen hundred yards, with great effect upon the same point. The effect of the concentrated fire of these batteries was soon very apparent; a considerable part of the wall came down with a tremendous crash; and the besieged, who were now obliged to husband their ammunition, were seen to be indefatigable in their efforts to intrench the place inside the breach, and render the counterscarp after it was carried incapable of descent. At ten o'clock on the 21st, a flag of truce to surrender was held out; but the governor refused to receive it.¹

The fire was consequently resumed, and with such extraordinary vigour, that the ten heavy pieces on the nearest Chofre sand-hills discharged three hundred and fifty rounds in fifteen and a half hours of daylight, being at the rate of about twenty-five discharges an hour, or one in every two minutes and a quarter—a rapidity of fire, to be sustained for so long a time, which is perhaps unexampled in artillery practice. The flanking batteries on the convent of St Bartholomew and in front of the Monte Olia, were also very destructive; and on the 23d a mortar battery and two sixty-eight pound carronades were turned upon the defences of the great breach, with such effect that the whole parapets near it were speedily destroyed, and the adjoining houses in the inside took fire and burned with extraordinary fierceness. The breach being now plainly practicable, the assault was ordered for the morning of the 24th. But so frightful was the conflagration at daybreak, that it seemed impossible for the assailants to penetrate into the town in that quarter,

CHAP.
LXXXVII.

1813.

5.
Breaching
batteries
established
against the
fortress.
July 20.

¹ Jones's
Sieges, ii.
28, 32.
Belm. iv.
618, 621.
Nap. vi.
25.

6.
Prepara-
tions for
storming
the breach,
and for its
defence.
July 22.

July 23.

CHAP.
LXXXVII.

1813.

July 24.

and therefore it was deferred till night, when the fall of the tide might again render the Urumea fordable, and it was hoped the fire would be abated by the houses being consumed. During the whole of the 24th, the besiegers' batteries kept up an incessant fire on the breach, as well with bombs and cannon-shot, as with shrapnell shells, then for the first time used in war, which did very great mischief to the besieged. But they, on their side, were not idle, and turned to the best account the breathing time thus afforded for making preparations against the assault. Live shells were placed along the top of the rampart, ready to be rolled down on the English troops as they threaded their way from the beach. The houses behind the burning edifices were loopholed, and filled with troops; and heavy guns loaded with grape-shot were placed on either side of the breach, to cut down the assailants if they won the summit of the flaming ruins.¹

¹ Jones's
Sieges, ii.
28, 37.
Belm. iv.
618, 623.
Nap. vi. 75,
79.

7.
Assault on
the place.

No sooner was it dark on the 24th than the storming column, consisting of two thousand men, under Major Fraser, Colonel Greville, and Colonel Cameron, silently defiled out of the trenches, and advanced with a swift pace over the intervening ground lying between them and the river. The ground, however, as it was dark, proved extremely difficult to pass over; it was strewn with rocks, covered with slippery sea-weed, which much impeded the march of the column; the water, when they reached the Urumea, was up to the soldiers' arm-pits; and when they got to the opposite side, they had to pass, for a considerable distance, immediately under the foot of the rampart, to the left of the breach, exposed to all the flaming projectiles which could be rolled down upon them from its summit. The column, however, advanced with great resolution, and got through the water unperceived by the enemy; but before they reached the foot of the rampart on the opposite side, a globe of compression, which had been run into an old drain near the counterscarp and glacis of the hornwork which flanked the breach, exploded

with tremendous violence, and shook all that part of the defences. The garrison, astonished at this event, abandoned the flanking outworks ; and the advancing column, though severely galled by the flanking fire of the British batteries on the other side of the Urumea, which, by firing too low, struck their own men, succeeded in reaching the foot of the breach without any very serious loss from the enemy. Major Fraser of the Royal Scotch, and Lieutenant Jones of the engineers, were the first to mount the breach, followed by a few brave men. If the remainder of the column had come up in quick succession, as was expected, the place would have been taken in a quarter of an hour ; for the enemy, thunderstruck at the rapidity of the advance, had retreated behind the ruins of the burning houses, and the pass might at that moment have been easily won.¹

But the troops, who came straggling up irregularly and in small bodies, as they made their way over the rocks and through the water, did not support the gallant party in advance so quickly as was expected ; and meanwhile the enemy, recovering from their consternation, opened a tremendous fire from all sides, as well upon the troops who had mounted the breach as on those who were struggling at its foot, and wending their difficult way between the rising flood and the rampart. The heroic Fraser was killed amid the burning ruins into which he had penetrated ; Jones stood, with a few brave soldiers, alone for some time on the breach, expecting aid, but none came up ; and before the arrival of the scaling ladders to escalate the ramparts, they were almost all killed or wounded. Colonel Greville and Colonel Cameron exerted themselves to the utmost to lead the troops up the breach ; and Lieutenant Campbell of the 9th twice mounted it, almost alone, and was twice wounded. But it was all in vain : the gallant men who had won the breach were all struck down by the fire which poured in upon them on all sides ; and it was found impossible to get the troops behind to

CHAP.
LXXVII.
1813.

¹ Jones's
Sieges, ii.
37, 39.
Belm. iv.
623, 624.
Nap. vi. 80.
Gurw. x.
589. Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
272.

8.
Repulse of
the assault.

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

¹ Belm. iv.
623, 626.
Nap. vi. 80,
83. Jones's
Sieges, ii.
37, 41.
Graham's
Desp. July
27, 1813.
Gurw. x.
589. Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
272, 273.

ascend into their place. At length the fire became so dreadful, that the troops who had crossed the river got into inextricable confusion; and the whole column fled across the Urumea in disorder, after sustaining a loss of five hundred and twenty men, including the gallant Sir Richard Fletcher, who was severely wounded. The rising tide threatened to drown all the wounded who lay between the flood and the rampart, in consequence of which a flag of truce was displayed by the British for an hour, at daylight, to enable the enemy to rescue the wounded from their perilous situation. With admirable humanity the French answered the appeal, and brought the whole of the maimed safe over the breach into the hospitals, where they were placed beside their own wounded men, and tended with equal care during the remainder of the siege.¹

9.
Wellington
arrives, and
turns the
siege into
a blockade.

July 25.

As soon as Wellington received intelligence of this bloody repulse, he repaired to San Sebastian from his headquarters near Pampeluna. Being convinced, from the experience he had now had of the quality of the enemy, that the place was not to be carried without a very considerable addition to the means of attack, which the present exhausted state of the besiegers' ammunition would not permit, he determined to suspend active operations, and convert the siege into a blockade, until the arrival of the supply of warlike stores from Portsmouth which had been written for a month before, and was hourly expected. They did not arrive, however, for a considerable time; and, meanwhile, a vehement irruption was made by the French force into Spain, which wellnigh broke through the investment of Pampeluna, raised the siege of San Sebastian, snatched from Wellington the fruits of his glorious victory, and might, by damping the hopes of the Allied sovereigns in Germany, after the repulse at Dresden, have altered the whole face of the war. These disastrous consequences were prevented solely by the heroic resistance of a few British brigades, the daring

intrepidity of their leaders, and the happy arrival of Wellington at the scene of danger, at the very moment when further resistance appeared hopeless. Such is the value of time in war, and such the magnitude of the consequences which often flow from the heroism or pusillanimity of a single regiment or brigade.

CHAP.
LXXVII.
1813.

No sooner did Napoleon receive intelligence at Dresden of the battle of Vitoria, than, measuring at once, with prophetic eye, the extent of the danger, he despatched Soult from his headquarters in Germany, to take the command of the whole French forces now assembled in the neighbourhood of Bayonne, under the title of Lieutenant of the Emperor. The danger, great as it was, appeared to the Emperor more threatening than it actually proved; for it is now known, that so utterly unprepared were the enemy for the rapidity of Wellington's success, that Bayonne, at the time the English standards approached the Bidassoa, was wholly unprovided for a siege, the guns not being even mounted on the ramparts; and if the English general had been aware of its defenceless state, he might, by pushing on, have made himself master of that great frontier fortress almost without firing a shot.* Soult arrived at Bayonne on the 13th of July, and immediately commenced the most active measures for putting that place in a state of defence, and reorganising the wreck of several different armies which were now assembled around its walls.¹

10.
Napoleon
sends Soult
with su-
preme
powers to
Bayonne.

¹ Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
264.

These consisted of the remains of the once formidable armies of the south of Spain, of the north, and of the

* "In consequence of a blind confidence in his [Napoleon's] good fortune, which a long series of uninterrupted triumphs can hardly excuse, Bayonne, the most important fortress on the southern frontier, was not at this moment beyond the reach of a *coup-de-main*. Struck with astonishment, the civil and military authorities had taken no steps whatever for its defence; and the English, without firing a shot, would have got possession of that important fortress, if they had been aware of its situation, and had had the boldness to continue their pursuit through the Pyrenees beyond the pass of Bioby."—*Victoires et Conquêtes*, xxii. 264. See also PELLÉ, 23, 24.

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

11.

Forces
which Soult
found there.

centre ; but although not a third of any of these immense hosts now remained, yet, being all united together under one head, and having a very narrow frontier to defend, they still presented a formidable force to repel the attacks of the enemy. From the imperial muster-rolls, it appears that the whole force which the French general now had at his disposal in the neighbourhood of Bayonne, amounted to one hundred and fourteen thousand men, of whom ninety-eight thousand were present with the eagles. Of these seventy thousand infantry, and above six thousand cavalry, were ready for active operations in the field ; the remainder formed the garrisons of San Sebastian, Pampeluna, Santona, and Bayonne.* The forces in Catalonia, at the same time, under Suchet, were about sixty-six thousand ; so that Napoleon still had one hundred and sixty-four thousand men present under arms to oppose the Allies in the Peninsula, or on the French frontier, and Soult alone had eighty-six guns at his command. But although the physical resources of his army were thus great, it was very deficient in spirit and organisation. Long marches had exhausted the strength, and continued defeats broken the spirit of the soldiers ; the divisions of so many different armies were blended together, without any proper arrangement or direction ; and vast numbers of soldiers, stragglers from regiments which had been destroyed or lost sight of, were huddled together in disorderly masses, without arms, or officers to direct their movements.¹

¹ Welling-
ton to Lord
Bathurst,
Aug. 1,
1813. *Gaz.*
x. 576.
Belm. i.
261, 262.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
264, 266.
Nap. vi. 68,
69. *Belm. i.*
261, 262.

12.

Character of
Marshal
Soult.

But Soult was one of those persons whose resolute and persevering character is eminently qualified to infuse his own spirit into such a disorderly body of troops, and remedy all the defects in organisation, equipment, and direction, which previous mismanagement had occasioned. Although his eye for tactics was not of the quickest kind, and he was far from possessing the rapidity of conception

* See Appendix, A, Chap. LXXVII.

and decision of execution which distinguished Napoleon, Wellington, and Ney, on the field of battle, yet he was unrivalled in the ability with which he effected the reorganisation of his armies and laid out his plans of strategy, and second to none in the tenacity with which he clung to their execution, under circumstances when to all others they appeared all but desperate. Had he possessed the vigour of Ney in actual combat, he would have been a perfect general ; had he been less inclined to acts of rapacity, his character as a man would have been comparatively unsullied. Although not of a strong make, and subject to a natural defect in the foot, which might be supposed to injure his seat on horseback,* yet he was capable of enduring the most severe fatigue, and was unwearied in the diligence with which he set himself to execute any mission with which he was intrusted, or repair any disasters with which he was called upon to contend. He subsequently held the most important situations in the royal councils of France, and was more than once intrusted by its sovereign with the supreme direction, both of civil and military affairs, on the most important occasions. Yet his fame as a general will rest mainly upon the admirable ability with which he struggled against Wellington in the campaign on which we are now about to enter, on the Pyrenees and in the south of France ; and the interest of the contest between these two great commanders is not a little enhanced by the cordial union which, long after the termination of the struggle, prevailed between them, and the constancy with which they exerted their great influence in their respective countries to preserve the blessings of peace, when the popular passions on either side were ready to rekindle the flames of war.

The first care of this great commander, upon taking the direction of the army, was to provide for the imme-

* One of his legs was club-footed.

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

13.

His division
of his forces,
and prepara-
tions for the
campaign.

diate security of Bayonne, which he found in no condition to make any resistance to the enemy. The ramparts were instantly lined with guns, the ditches cleared out, the decayed parts of the wall hastily repaired, and palisades run up to prevent the approach of the enemy to the outworks. The army was next divided into three wings, the right being placed under the orders of General Reille; d'Erlon had the command of the centre, and Clausel of the left wing. The cavalry, which was not numerous, was arranged in two divisions—one of dragoons and one of hussars. This force occupied the whole northern issues of the passes of the Pyrenees, from the pass of Roncesvalles on the east to the mouth of the Bidassoa on the west; and Soult himself established his headquarters at Ascain, where he was indefatigably engaged in organising his forces and completing his arrangements. During this time, Wellington's headquarters were nearly opposite at Lezaca, within the Spanish territory. With such vigour were the French general's labours conducted, and so admirably was he seconded by the spirit of the inhabitants of Bayonne, and of the adjoining province of Béarn, that in less than a fortnight his preparations were complete, and he was in a condition to take the field. He resolved immediately to recross the Spanish frontier, and direct his march to Pampeluna, the garrison of which had not now remaining provisions for more than ten days; while that of San Sebastian was hourly expected to sink, if the siege were not raised, under the impetuous assaults of the British soldiery. Wherefore, after issuing a spirited proclamation to his troops—in which he ascribed their misfortunes to the faults of their commanders, and, without disguising the merits of the British general and army, promised again to lead them to victory^{1*}—his whole army was put

¹ Wellington to Lord Bathurst, Aug. 1, 1813. *Gaz.* x. 576. *Vict. et Conq.* xxii. 265. *Belm.* iv. 262, 263.

* “ While Germany was thus the theatre of great events, that enemy who, under pretence of succouring the inhabitants of the Peninsula, has in reality devoted them to ruin, was not inactive. He assembled the whole of his dis-

in motion at daybreak on the 25th, being the very day on which Wellington was engaged at San Sebastian in inspecting the works after the failure of the first assault.

The Allies mustered, in all, seventy-two thousand combatants of the Anglo-Portuguese army, of whom seven thousand were cavalry, besides twenty-five thousand Spaniards.* The relative force of the contending armies, therefore, was not materially different, the more especially as the numerous National Guards whom the French general could summon to his standard, of great service in mountain warfare, and well acquainted with the intricacies of the passes, fully compensated the Spanish troops at the command of the English general. Both armies occupied

CHAP.
LXXVII.
1813.

14.
Position
and strength
of the Bri-
tish army.

disposable forces—English, Spaniards, and Portuguese—under his most experienced officers; and relying upon the superiority of his numbers, advanced in three divisions against the French forces assembled upon the Douro. With well-provided fortresses in his front and rear, a skilful general, enjoying the confidence of his troops, might, by selecting good positions, have braved and discomfited this motley levy. But unhappily, at this critical period, timorous and pusillanimous counsels were followed. The fortresses were abandoned and blown up; hasty and disorderly marches gave confidence to the enemy; and a veteran army—small indeed in number, but great in all that constitutes the military character—which had fought, bled, and triumphed in every province of Spain, beheld its glory tarnished, and itself compelled to abandon all its acquisitions—the trophies of many a well-fought and bloody day. When at length the indignant voice of the troops arrested this disgraceful flight, and its commander, touched with shame, yielded to the general desire, and determined on giving battle near Vitoria, who can doubt, from this generous enthusiasm, this fine sense of honour, what would have been the result had the general been worthy of his troops? had he, in short, made those dispositions and movements, which would have secured to one part of his army the co-operation and support of the other?

“Let us not, however, defraud the enemy of the praise which is due to him. The dispositions and arrangements of their general have been prompt, skilful, and consecutive. The valour and steadiness of his troops have been praiseworthy; yet do not forget that it is to the benefit of your example they owe their present military character; and that, whenever the relative duties of a French general and his troops have been ably fulfilled, their enemies have commonly had no other resource than flight. Soldiers! I partake your chagrin, your grief, your indignation; I know that the blame of the present situation of the army is imputable to others: the glory of repairing it is your own. The Emperor’s instructions are, to drive the enemy from yonder lofty heights, which enable him proudly to survey our fertile valleys, and chase him beyond the Ebro. If won, the Spanish soil must bear your tents, and from thence your resources be drawn. No difficulties are insurmountable to your valour and devotion.”—SOULT to his Soldiers, 22d July 1813; GURWOOD, x. 577.

* See Appendix B, Chap. LXXVII.

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

a line about eleven leagues in length, from the sea on the left, to the mountains on the westward of the pass of Roncesvalles on the extreme right. But there was this difference between the two—and it was a difference which came to be of vital importance in the outset of operations. Although the British were on the higher ground, and occupied passes difficult of access, yet the columns posted in them, separated from each other by inaccessible ridges, could only communicate with, or receive support from each other, by a roundabout march of some days in the rear; while the French, who were grouped in the plain, from which access was easy from one part of the line to another, could at pleasure throw the weight of their force against the weakest part of the Allied line, and overwhelm it by a vehement irruption, with superior forces, before succour could by possibility be obtained by the long circuits in the rear, from the remoter parts of the position.¹

¹ Wellington to Lord Bathurst, 1st August 1813. *Gur.* x. 578, 579. *Nap.* vi. 93, 94. *Belm.* i. 262, 263.

15.
Irruption of the French into the Pyrenees. July 25.

Atlas,
Plate 82.

Having concentrated his troops, and selected his point of attack, Soult, at daybreak on the 25th, with thirty-five thousand combatants, ascended the French side of the pass of Roncesvalles; while d'Erlon with the centre, twenty thousand strong, threatened the British centre by the Puerta de Maya, at the head of the valley of Bastan; and Villatte, with eighteen thousand, remained in observation on the Bidassoa. Soult's objects in this measure were to accumulate forces on Wellington's right more rapidly than the English general could collect troops to oppose him; to relieve Pampeluna, for the revictualling of which he had collected a large convoy; and then, turning to his own right, to descend upon San Sebastian and the troops covering the siege, at the same time that his centre and right forced the Allied positions in their front. To facilitate this operation, great efforts had been made in the preceding days to smooth the ascent to the pass of Roncesvalles, and three hundred bullocks were in readiness to assist in dragging the guns up the long and toilsome ascent, nearly twenty miles in length, leading to

its summit. Sixty pieces of artillery accompanied the centre and left ; and the troops carried provisions for four days' consumption. Though the British officers at the outposts were on the alert, from the movements they observed among the enemy, yet so well had the concentration of the French troops been masked by the intervening heights, and concealed by the peasantry, that they were far from being prepared for the furious onset by which they were suddenly assailed.¹

CHAP.
LXXVII.
1813.

¹ Pellot, 23,
24. Gur. x.
579. Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
267. Nap.
v. 108, 113.

At daybreak on the 25th, Clausel with three divisions, mustering fully eighteen thousand men, commenced an attack on Byng's brigade and Murillo's Spaniards, little more than five thousand strong, who occupied an elevated position five thousand feet above the level of the sea, on the summit of a craggy ridge of rock at Altobiscar, commanding the higher parts of the Roncesvalles pass. The steep ascent soon rang with louder notes than the bugles of Charlemagne ; for the British troops, undismayed by the multitude of assailants, made a vigorous resistance : the musketry pealed sharp and long among the rocks, and the advancing columns fell fast beneath the deadly fire which issued from above the clouds. But the French, electrified by the presence of their new general, and burning to efface the recollection of their former defeats, advanced with the utmost intrepidity, and toiled far up the steep : still, however, the British made good the summit, until intelligence was received in the evening that Murillo, assailed by superior forces, had fallen back on the left, where the assailants under Reille were making way along the summit of the Arola ridge, and that a Spanish battalion stationed at Orbaiceta, on the right, had been turned. Upon this the strong position of Altobiscar was abandoned ; and the British general, united to Cole's division, which had come up from the left during the night, evacuated the great ridge, and descended on the opposite side towards the general rendezvous of the troops in that quarter, in the valley of Zubiri.²

16.
Their success at the pass of Roncevalles.

² Wellington to Lord Bathurst, August 1, 1813. Gur. x. 579. Nap. v. 108, 113. Vict. et Conq. xxii. 267. Pellot's Guerre des Pyrénées, 23, 24.

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

17.

Description
of the
Puerta de
Maya.

While the pass of Roncesvalles was thus forced on the Allied right, the Puerta de Maya in the centre had also been the theatre of a sanguinary conflict. D'Erlon had early in the morning put himself in motion on the same day, to attack that pass at the head of the valley of Bastan, and thus pour down by another road on the British blockading force round Pampeluna. Hill was there with the second division; and the ground at the summit of the pass was exceedingly strong, consisting of an elevated valley, three miles broad, flanked by lofty rocks and ridges on either side, and presenting scenery of the grandest description. The vale of Estevan, indeed, which leads to it, has at first an air of fertility and beauty; but it narrows as it rises towards the north, and is soon lost in the gloom and desolation of the frontier. Mountains are there crowded together in all varieties of savage magnificence; here crested with gray and jagged cliffs, there rounded and green upon the summits, to which the panting traveller is led by long and winding paths. The sides of the rugged barrier are strewn with vast masses of black rock, detached by winter frosts from the peaks above; the roads are narrow and stony; the fastnesses into which they lead, dark and shadowy; and the solitary traveller, in traversing them, in general hears only the dash of the waters which descend in numerous cascades on all sides, or the scream of the eagles which float high in the azure firmament.¹

¹ Scherer,
ii. 234. Per-
sonal obser-
vation.

18.

Combat
there, and
defeat of
the British.

The better to conceal his real intentions, Count d'Erlon, early on the morning of the 25th, made some demonstrations against the small passes of Ispéguy and Lareta, which lie to the right of that of Maya, and were guarded by the Portuguese. Under cover of these movements, he skilfully brought forward his main body, long concealed from view, by the great road leading direct from Urdax up the defile, and they were near the summit before they were perceived. The alarm-guns were instantly fired; the pickets were driven in with heavy

loss, and the light companies slowly retired, firing quickly as they fell back, with the most exemplary steadiness. Breathless with running up the Spanish side from the bivouacs a little below the summit, the British regiments, however, soon arrived. The 34th, 39th, and 58th were first in line, taking their places by companies, and immediately began to fire. The 50th followed, and supported them with remarkable steadiness. Soon after the 92d appeared; and the Highlanders, at home among the rocks, long kept the enemy at bay by the most devoted courage.* But the French increased rapidly, and fought well; two-thirds of the 92d were at length struck down, the slaughter was terrible, and the ascent literally blocked up by the piles of the slain. Other regiments, particularly the 71st and 82d, were successively brought up, and maintained the pass long and bravely against the enemy. But it was all in vain; they were literally forced back, and sullenly retreated across the ridge, still resolutely combating. So long-continued and obstinate was the fight, that the whole ammunition of the 82d was exhausted; and at length, as they still kept their ground, they were reduced to roll down stones on the enemy. In this desperate condition, the Allies were driven back to the last ridge of the pass, and were on the point of abandoning the crest of the mountain altogether, when Barnes, with a brigade of the 7th division, came up from Echalar, and by a brilliant charge with the 6th regiment, drove the French back to the first summit of the range.¹ In this disastrous and bloody combat, the Allies had

CHAP.
LXXVII.
1813.

¹ Wellington to Lord Bathurst, Aug. 1, 1813. Gur. x. 579. Scherer, ii. 247. Nap. v. 118, 122. Pellot, 26, 27. Vict. et Conq. xxii. 267, 268.

* The heroism of the 92d regiment on this occasion was the object of deserved admiration to the whole army. "The stern valour of the 92d," says Napier, "*principally composed of Irishmen*, would have graced Thermopylæ." No one can doubt the justice of this eulogium on the regiment; but the statement of its being composed principally of Irishmen is a mistake, arising from misinformation on the part of the gallant colonel. The author has ascertained from inquiry at its officers, particularly Lieutenant-Colonel Macdonald, that at that period nine-tenths of the whole corps were Scotch Highlanders.—See NAPIER, vi. 122; and App. C, Chap. LXXVII. where the proportion of Irish and Scotch in the regiment is given; and *United Service Journal for October 1840*, p. 42.

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

19.
Advantages
gained by
Soul't on
this day's
operations.

fifteen hundred men killed, wounded, and made prisoners ; the French lost, by their own admission, as many ; but they won the pass, and took four pieces of cannon.

So far, the most brilliant success had crowned Soul't's operations. He had, unknown to the British, accumulated the bulk of his forces against their right, and thrown himself in such strength on the two principal passes leading to Pampeluna, that they were both won. Final success seemed inevitable ; for if the Allies had been unable to make good the summit of the hill, with all the advantages of ground in their favour, it was not to be expected that they could arrest the victorious enemy in the course of the rapid descent, not above twenty miles in length, from either of these passes to the ramparts of Pampeluna. If the other French generals had been as well aware as Soul't was of the inestimable importance of time in all, but especially in mountain contests, it is more than probable that this would have been the result, and a new aspect have been given to the campaign, and possibly the fortunes of the war, by the raising of the siege of San Sebastian and of the blockade of Pampeluna. But d'Erlon, satisfied with having won the Puerta de Maya, remained there on the night of the 25th, without following up his successes ; and Reille's three divisions, which had received orders to march from St Jean Pied-de-port for Arola and Lindus on the preceding day, lost much precious and irreparable time in incorporating some conscripts which had come up with their respective regiments, so that they did not ascend the rocks of Arola in time to seize that important pass before the British troops had got through. Thus, though the crest of the mountains was won, no decisive blow had been struck ; and the Allied and French troops, after nearly equal mutual slaughter, were wending their way down the valleys on the southern slope of the Pyrenees.¹

¹ Pellot, 25,
26. Nap. vi.
113, 114.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
268.

On the morning of the 26th, Soul't's march was retarded by a thick fog which hung on the higher parts of the

mountains ; he at length, however, got into motion, and descended the valley in pursuit of the British. But he soon found that in mountain warfare, though the assailant may have the advantage in the first onset, difficulties accumulate around him as he advances, if he is opposed by a resolute and persevering adversary. Cole, who was retreating down the valley from Roncesvalles, met Picton, who had hurried to the scene of danger in advance of his division, which, however, had crossed the hills and reached Zubiri, a few miles in his rear. Thither the British generals immediately retreated, with some sharp combats in the rearguard ; and the two divisions united, now mustering eleven thousand bayonets, offered battle on the ridge in front of Zubiri. But Soult declined to attack, being desirous, before he did so, of being joined by d'Erlon's divisions ; and, as they did not come up before night, he let fall some expressions of displeasure, discovering a secret apprehension of failure. Next day Picton, with both divisions now under his command, continued his retreat towards Pampeluna ; desiring to concentrate his forces and give battle at SORAOREN, four miles in front of that fortress. Hill, finding his right uncovered, and being severely weakened by the combat of Maya, followed in the same direction down the valley of Bastan ; and the mountain passes in the centre and right of the British position being now all abandoned, alarm and dismay spread far and wide in the rear. All the valleys leading down to Navarre were filled with baggage waggons, mules, artillery, and convoys, falling back in confusion ; and rumour, with its hundred tongues, everywhere spread the report that an irreparable disaster had been sustained. Meanwhile the garrison of Pampeluna, taking advantage of the alarm, made a sally ; d'Abisbal, who commanded the blockading force, immediately spiked his guns and destroyed his magazines, to prevent their falling into the enemy's hands ;¹ and he would have raised the blockade entirely, had not Don

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

20.

Retreat of
the British
to the neigh-
bourhood of
Pampeluna.
July 26.

July 27.

¹ Nap. vi.
123, 125.
Scherer, ii.
248. La
Péni.Camp.
des Pyre-
nées, 32, 34.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
268. Robin-
son's Life
of Picton,
ii. 218, 219.

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

21.
Wellington's measures on hearing of these disasters.

Carlos d'España fortunately come up at the moment with his corps, and restored some sort of order in the besieging force.

Wellington was on his way back from San Sebastian when he received intelligence of Soult's irruption—but only of the one at the pass of Maya. As he did not conceive it possible, however, that with no larger force than d'Erlon had, he would attempt to penetrate the British lines, he thought that attack was only a feint, and that the real effort would be made on the Lower Bidassoa, to raise the siege of San Sebastian. In the course of the night, however, correct accounts arrived of the Roncesvalles and Maya combats; and he immediately adopted the same measures as Napoleon had done at Mantua in 1796, and Suwarroff at the same fortress in 1799,¹ by ordering Graham instantly to raise the siege, embark the stores and guns, and hasten with all his disposable forces to the support of Giron, in a defensive position previously selected for battle, on the southern side of the Bidassoa. These orders were punctually executed; and, meanwhile, Wellington set out on horseback with the utmost speed to join Picton's and Cole's divisions in their position in front of Pampeluna. As he entered the village of Soraoren, he saw Clausel's division moving along the crest of the mountain opposite, which made an alteration of his dispositions advisable. He immediately dismounted, wrote the necessary orders in pencil on the parapet of the bridge, sent them off by Lord Fitzroy Somerset, the only one of his staff who had been able to keep up with his racing speed, and rode alone up the ascent to join the British troops. The moment he was descried, a shout was raised by the nearest battalion, which spread along the line till the mountains re-echoed with the clang; and the French generals, startled by the sound, paused in their advance till they ascertained the cause of the tumult. The generals on the opposite sides were within sight of each other. Soult was so near, that even his features

¹ *Ante*, ch. xx. § 103, and ch. xxvii. § 81.

were visible with the aid of a telescope. "Yonder," said Wellington, "is a great commander ; but he is a cautious one, and will delay his attack till he ascertain the cause of these cheers ; that will give time for the sixth division to arrive, and I shall beat him." And so in effect it proved. No serious attack—except one on a hill held by the Spaniards, which was repulsed—was made that day ; and, before the next, such reinforcements arrived as enabled Wellington to resume the offensive and secure the victory. A sharp fire of musketry along the front of the line, indeed, commenced at six o'clock in the evening ; but a dreadful storm soon after arose, and prevented any important operations on either side till the following day.¹

Early on the morning of the 28th, the sixth division, to the infinite joy of their comrades, came up, and considerable reinforcements had arrived during the night ; the whole Allied centre, now thoroughly aroused, being directed to the scene of danger on the right. The position which the Allies occupied was very strong, and such as seemed well adapted to arrest the march of a successful enemy, and turn the flood-tide of victory into ebb. Their troops were drawn up in two lines, both on very strong ground ; the first, posted on the summit of the ridge of Orcayen, stretched in the form of a convex semicircle, from the village of that name on the left to Zabaldica on the right, and was about two miles in length, covered on the right flank by the river Guy, and on the left by the torrent Lanz. On this elevated ground, the guns from which commanded the roads down the valleys on either side, stood the fourth division under Cole ; while the sixth division was drawn up across the Lanz in the valley on the left, and entirely blocked up the approach to Pampeluna in that direction ; and two Spanish, supported by the 40th British regiment, held in strength the crest of the ridge on the extreme right. The second line was posted on a still more rugged ridge, which runs

CHAP.
LXXVII.
1813.

¹ Nap. vi.
129, 130.
Pellot, 28,
29. Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
268. Robin-
son's Life of
Picton, ii.
219, 226.
Wellington
to Lord Bathurst, Aug.
1, 1813.
Gurw. x.
580, 581.

22.
Battle of
Soraoren.
July 28.

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

¹ Wellington to Lord Bathurst, 1st Aug. 1813. *Gaz.* x. 580, 581. *Nap.* vi. 132, 133. Robinson's *Picton*, ii. 219. *Vict. et Conq.* xxii. 269. *Pellot*, 29.

entirely across the valley, and is cleft asunder by two narrow openings, through the left of which the Lanz makes its way between overhanging rocks, while through the one on the right the Guy descends; and these two streams, uniting in the rear of the bridge, form the Arga river, which, a mile further on, washes the ramparts of Pampeluna. On this strong ground, the front of which is uncommonly bold and abrupt towards the north, Picton's division was placed; his left at Goraity, his right in front of Huarte—which village lies immediately behind the opening through which the Guy flows, communicating with the Spaniards under Murillo and O'Donnell, who had been hurried up from the lines before Pampeluna, stretched on the heights across the gap formed by the Lanz, and in front of the village of Villaba.¹

23.
Defeat of
the French
on the right.
July 28.

The rocks on which the first line stood, consisted of huge piles, standing one above another, like the ruins of gigantic castles half gone to ruin; and none but the troops inured to the perils of the Peninsular warfare would have thought of assailing them. Soult's men, however, were equal to the task. Having minutely surveyed the ground, he resolved upon an attack; being unaware, from the hilly ground which concealed their march, of the arrival of the sixth division, and having learned from deserters that Hill, with three fresh divisions and a Portuguese brigade, was expected at latest on the following morning. D'Erlon's men had not yet come up; so that his forces did not exceed, after the losses in the advance, thirty-two thousand men. Not more than eighteen thousand of the Anglo-Portuguese army were assembled; but the Spaniards were ten thousand more, and the great strength of the position compensated for the inferiority in the quality of the latter of these troops. About mid-day on the 28th, the anniversary of the battle of Talavera, the French tirailleurs, with the most admirable gallantry, began to swarm up the

July 28.

steep: while Clausel's right division, in the valley of Lanz, burning with ardour, poured down the sides of the stream in one impetuous mass, even before the signal for attack was given. But just as it had turned Cole's left, and was preparing to double upon his rear, a Portuguese brigade of the sixth division appeared on the heights on its right flank; while the broad lines of the English uniforms, emerging from behind the same ridge, stood in battle array in its front. Time there was none, either for deliberation or retreat; the British in front opened a heavy fire on the head of the column; the Portuguese on the right poured in their shot on the one flank; while two brigades of the fourth division, descending from their rocky fastnesses on the left, smote the other with redoubled fury. Thus fiercely assailed at once in front and both flanks by an enemy previously invisible, the French columns recoiled, still bravely combating, and strewed their numerous slain along the line of their retreat.¹

While this bloody repulse was going on upon the British left in the valley of the Lanz, a conflict of unequalled severity was raging along the top of the ridge in the centre and right. Without any proper unity in their efforts, but with surpassing valour, Clausel's other divisions rushed up the steep face of the mountain; and, undismayed by a plunging fire, which in many cases swept off half their battalions, worked their toilsome way up to the top. In some instances their extraordinary gallantry met with deserved though but temporary success. The seventh Portuguese Caçadores shrunk from the terrible encounter on the summit, and the French established themselves for a few minutes on their part of the left of the ridge; but Ross's British brigade, instantly advancing, charged with a loud shout, and hurled them down the steep. Again they returned, however, reinforced, to the attack: another Portuguese regiment on Ross's right wing having given way, the French penetrated in at the opening;² and that heroic brigade,

CHAP.
LXXXVII.

1813.

¹ Nap. vi.
136, 137.
Wellington
to Lord Ba-
thurst, 1st
Aug. 1813.
Gur. x. 581.
Scherer, ii.
251. Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
269.

24.
Dreadful
contest in
the centre
and on the
right-centre.

² Gurw. x.
582. Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
269. Pellot,
29. Nap. vi.
138, 139.

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

25.
In which
the French
are at length
repulsed.

assailed at once in front and flank, was compelled to give ground. Instantly the assailants stood on its position on the summit ; their line began to deploy to a considerable breadth on either side ; and the crest of the mountain, enveloped in cloud and flame, seemed already won.

In this extremity Wellington ordered up Byng's brigade, which advanced in double-quick time ; the 27th and 48th were brought down from the higher ground in the centre ; with indescribable fury they charged the crowded masses on the summit, and the whole were rolled in wild confusion over the rocks, and lost half their numbers under the British bayonet. In the course of this desperate conflict, the gallant fourth division surpassed all its former exploits ; every regiment charged with the bayonet,* some of them four different times, and the heroic Ross had two horses shot under him. Meanwhile Reille's division, on the left of Clausel's third division, had environed the right of the position above the Guy stream, where the two Spanish regiments were placed ; and, mounting fiercely the hill-side, dislodged them, after a brave resistance, from their ground on the left of the 40th British regiment. A Portuguese battalion, rapidly advancing, took its place in their room beside that noble corps, which waited in stern silence until the French set their feet on the broad summit ; "but when their glittering arms appeared over the brow of the mountain, the charging cry was heard, the crowded mass was broken to pieces, and a tempest of bullets followed its flight. Four times this assault was renewed ; and the French officers were seen to pull up their tired men by the belts, so fierce and resolute were they to win. But it was the labour of Sisyphus. The vehement shout and shock of the British soldiers always prevailed ; and at last, with thinned ranks, tired limbs, and hearts hopeless from repeated failures, they were so abashed, that three British companies sufficed to bear down a whole brigade."¹

¹ Nap. vi. 138, 140. Pellot, 29, 30. Scherer, ii. 251, 252. Vict. et Conq. xxii. 269. Wellington to Lord Bathurst, Aug. 1, 1813. Gurw. x. 582.

* The 40th, 7th, 20th, and 23d.—GURW. x. 582.

Disconcerted by this bloody repulse, Soult drew off his forces towards evening, and resumed his former position on a range of hills opposite to Wellington's. Just then the heads of d'Erlon's columns began to appear on the right; that general having, during the action, penetrated to within a league of Pampeluna, and been prevented from reaching that fortress chiefly by the violent fire which he heard in his rear, which induced him to remeasure his steps. It was too late to think of resuming the contest. The strength of Wellington's position had been proved; twelve thousand men on the first ridge, who alone had been engaged, had defeated all the efforts of twenty-five thousand who had mounted to the assault with the most heroic bravery, and they were weakened by the loss of three thousand men. Hill's divisions, it was well known, would come up during the night; and before the morrow, fifty thousand men, posted on the strongest positions, would be ready in front of Pampeluna to dispute the further progress of the French troops. With a heavy heart, therefore, Soult gave orders for a retreat at all points on the following day, to the infinite grief of the garrison of Pampeluna, the troops of which, hearing the cannon so near them, and on some heights even seeing the French uniforms, had deemed their deliverance at hand, and already raised shouts of joy on their crowded ramparts. They had made, however, good use of the temporary suspension of the blockade, and exerted themselves so diligently in sweeping the adjacent plain for supplies, while O'Donnell's troops were absent, that they were enabled to prolong the defence above a month longer than would have been otherwise practicable.¹

Though obliged to relinquish his design of relieving Pampeluna, Soult had not yet, however, abandoned all hope of gaining something by his irruption; and, accordingly, on the 29th, instead of falling back by the direct road towards Roncesvalles, by which he had entered, he manœuvred on his right, with the view of throwing the

CHAP.
LXXXVII.

1813.

26.

Soult determines to
retreat.

¹ Pellot, 30, 31. Vict. et Conq. xxii. 269. Nap. vi. 139, 140. Wellington to Lord Bathurst, Aug. 1, 1813. Gurw. x. 582, 583. Scherer, ii. 251, 252.

27.

Movements on both sides following the battle. July 29.

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

weight of his forces towards San Sebastian, and raising the siege of that fortress. He was the more induced to do so, as the troops around it were much weakened, the whole centre and right of the British army being concentrated on the extreme right in front of Pampeluna. With this view he, during the night of the 29th, occupied in strength the crest of the ridge lying to the westward of the Lanz, thus connecting his centre in position with his right, destined to commence the offensive movement against Sir Rowland Hill. On his side, Wellington, perceiving that although preparations for retreat were making, yet the troops in his front stood firm, resolved upon an immediate attack. He was now in communication with Hill's three divisions, who had arrived by the pass of Vilatte, in the neighbourhood of Lizasso; and having fifty thousand men in hand, of whom thirty-five thousand were English and Portuguese, he deemed himself in sufficient strength to assume the offensive, and drive the enemy from their advanced position. With this view, he ordered Lord Dalhousie to possess himself with his division of the ridge in front of his position, which turned the enemy's right; while Picton with his division was to move forward to turn their left, by descending from the ridge of Soraoren, and advancing by Zabaldica up the valley of the Guy. Arrangements were at the same time made for attacking the enemy's central position, opposite to the heights which had been the theatre of such a bloody conflict on the preceding day, as soon as the effect of these flank operations began to appear.¹

¹ Gurw. x.
584, 585.
Nap. vi.
146, 148.
Jom. iv.
500. Robin-
son's Pic-
ton, ii. 225.

28.
Great suc-
cess of Dal-
housie on
the left.

These movements were all made with the utmost precision, and proved entirely successful. Before daylight broke, Dalhousie was at the head of his division, (the 7th,) cheering them up the rugged paths which led to the lofty ridge they were to gain, on the right bank of the Lanz: the enemy's troops were driven before them like chaff, and the first rays of the sun glittered on the British bayonets on the summit of the range. Murillo's

Spaniards and Campbell's Portuguese speedily followed, exhibiting an imposing mass of fifteen thousand combatants on the crest of the mountains, on the enemy's extreme right; while at the same time a general attack was made by the British centre, which now descended from its stronghold above the village of Soraoren, on the French centre, which still held its old position on the heights to its left. Picton, at the same time, pressed forward with his division up the valley of the Guy, on the British right; and, not content with driving Reille's men in his front before him up the pass, detached a brigade which scaled the heights on the left of the French position. The effect of these advances and attacks, which were all made at the same time, and with that enthusiastic ardour which springs from the universal transport at returning victory, was to force the enemy to abandon entirely his position, and retreat up the valleys of the Lanz and the Guy towards Olague and Zubiri.¹

CHAP.
LXXVII.
1813.

¹ Gurw. x.
584, 585.
Pellot, 33.
Nap. vi.
146, 149.
Jom. iv.
500.

Soraoren was now carried by storm by Byng's division and Madden's Portuguese, amidst deafening cheers, and fourteen hundred prisoners made. The whole valley was filled with smoke, which appeared to Dalhousie's men on the heights like agitated foam in the hollow; while the roar of the cannon and rattle of the musketry were re-echoed with awful effect from mountain to mountain. This general attack relieved the pressure on Hill, who had been assailed on the extreme British left by such superior forces early in the morning, that he was driven with considerable loss from the range of heights which he occupied to another in his rear in front of Marcalain; but Dalhousie's able movement compelled the enemy to retire in their turn; and at length both parties, thoroughly exhausted, sank to sleep on their stony beds above the clouds. The Allies in this day's combats lost nineteen hundred men, of whom two-thirds were Portuguese, upon whom the weight of the action had fallen, and to whom its chief glory belonged;² but the French

29.
Storming of
Soraoren,
and general
retreat of
the French.

² Wellington to Lord Bathurst, August 1, 1813. Gur. x. 584, 585. Nap. vi. 146, 149. Pellot, 33, 34. Robinson's Picton, ii. 225, 226. Jom. iv. 500.

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

30.
Disastrous
retreat of
the French
across the
frontier.

were weakened by an equal number killed and wounded, and, in addition, three thousand were made prisoners, and great numbers dispersed, and were lost in the woods and ravines.*

Soult, after this disastrous defeat, continued his retreat on the day following with all possible expedition up the valleys of the Lanz and Guy ; but he was now in a most hazardous situation. His troops were all worn out with excessive toil ; the combatants were reduced to thirty-five thousand ; Foy, with eight thousand whom he had rallied, was retiring up the Guy towards Zubiri, entirely separated from the main body, which was slanting down towards the Bidassoa ; and the baggage, artillery, and caissons, could scarcely be hoped to be preserved while recrossing the rugged summits of the Pyrenees. Graham, with twenty thousand, was ready to stop him on the side of San Sebastian. It was only by an extraordinary exertion of skill and coolness that his army in these circumstances was preserved from total ruin. He directed his retreat, not by the valley of Bastan towards the Puerta de Maya, as d'Erlon had entered, but by the pass of Donna Maria towards San Estevan, Elizondo, and the valley of the Upper Bidassoa. At the last pass, his rearguard made a stand in a very strong defile, to gain time for the carriages and artillery in their rear to get on ; but Hill turned the left of the gorge, and Dalhousie the right, and after a vigorous resistance the enemy were driven from their stronghold in utter confusion, and with very severe loss. Meanwhile Byng pushed on, and in Elizondo captured a large and valuable convoy of provisions ; and, rapidly advancing, reoccupied the Maya pass. Wellington's troops had now almost entirely enclosed Soult's main body in a net, from which it seemed impossible

July 31.

* Five-and-twenty years ago, the author received a most interesting account of these days' actions from his noble and lamented friend, Lord Dalhousie, who bore so distinguished a part in them. The lapse of that long period has taken nothing from the vividness of the impression produced by his graphic narrative, from which the preceding detail is in great part taken.

for him to escape : for his soldiers, unconscious of their danger, were grouped close together in the deep and narrow valley of Estevan : three British divisions and one Spanish, under Wellington, were on his right flank concealed by the mountains ; Hill was close behind him ; Dalhousie held the pass of Donna Maria in his rear, which he had just won ; Byng was at Maya, at the head of the valley ; the light division would in two hours block it up at Estevan ; and Graham was marching to close the only other exit from the valley by Vera and Echalar.¹

CHAP.
LXXXVII.
1813.

¹ Wellington to Lord Bathurst, August 1, 1813. Gur. x. 585, 586. Nap. vi. 154, 156.

Dispirited and worn out as his men were, Soult was in no condition to force any of these formidable defiles, defended by victorious troops, and his surrender seemed inevitable. So hopeful was the English general of such a result, that, screened by the rocks, from behind which he surveyed the whole valley, he prohibited his men from issuing forth to capture Soult himself, who was seen riding in a careless way along its bottom, lest the catastrophe should awaken the French army from its perilous dream of security, and issued the strictest orders that not a man should show himself from behind the ridge which concealed them from the enemy. At this moment, when every bosom beat high with exultation at the expected glorious trophy of their valour they were so soon to obtain, in the surrender of a whole army with a marshal of France at its head, three British marauders issued from their concealment, to plunder in the valley. The sight of the red coats was not lost upon Soult, who instantly perceived the imminence of his danger. His whole army was immediately put in motion, and hurried towards the passes leading to the Lower Bidassoa by Estevan, which they got through just before the Spaniards under Longa, or the light division, came up to close the terrible defiles. Such is war : the disobedience to orders by three soldiers saved France from the greatest calamity,² and deprived England of

^{31.}
And narrowly escapes being made prisoner.

² Nap. vi. 154, 156. Wellington to Lord Bathurst, 1st August 1813. Gur. x. 585, 586. Pellot, 34, 35.

CHAP.
LXXXVII.

1813.

32.

Disorderly
retreat of
the French
to Echalar.

the greatest triumph recorded in the annals of either monarchy.

It soon appeared from what a fearful danger the emerging of these marauders from their retreat had delivered the French army. In their last march to the defiles of Echalar, when the army was hurrying forward to win the pass before the enemy, great part of the French army, now thoroughly discouraged, broke its ranks and dispersed. Soult, who was endeavouring to form a rearguard to arrest the pursuit of the enemy, was seized with indignation when he beheld the disorderly bands which in wild confusion came hurrying forward. "Cowards!" said he, "where are you flying to? You are Frenchmen, and you are running away! In the name of honour, halt and face the enemy!" Stung by these reproaches, twelve hundred men rallied under the directions of the marshal and his aides-de-camp, and formed a sort of rearguard; but the remainder fled on without intermission; and the torrent of fugitives swept impetuously down, with the roar and whirl of a mighty rapid, to the defiles of Yanzi and Echalar. Before they got there the head of the column was as much disordered as the rear; the weather was oppressively sultry; and though the great body of the bewildered mass found vent during the night by the latter defile, yet a frightful scene ensued next day, when Reille's divisions were sweeping through by the gorge of Yanzi.¹

¹ Nap. vi.
158, 160.
Gurw. x.
597. Pel-
lot, 34, 35.
Cooke's
Narrative,
84, 85.

33.

Dreadful
disaster in
the defile.
Aug. 1.

The French were there wedged in a narrow road, between inaccessible rocks on the one side and the river on the other. While struggling through this dreadful pass, the head of the light division reached the summit of the precipice which overhung the road, and immediately began firing down on the dense throng. Indescribable confusion followed. The cavalry drew their swords, and charged through the pass; the infantry were trampled under foot; numbers, horses and all, were precipitated into the river: some in despair fired vertically up at the

summit of the cliffs ; the wounded implored quarter as they were rolled over the brink, and hung suspended, yet bleeding, on the branches of trees over the roaring torrent. So piteous was the scene that many even of the iron veterans of the light division ceased to fire, or discharged their pieces with averted gaze. With such circumstances of horror did the last columns of that mighty host leave Spain, who but a few days before had mounted the pass of Roncesvalles buoyant with spirit, and in all the pride of apparently irresistible strength ! And yet the disaster, great as it was to the French arms, would have been still greater if all the men had been able to reach their ground at the time assigned them ; for Longa's division, if they had come up in time, would have rendered the pass of Yanzi altogether impassable to the disorderly torrent of Soult's masses ; and though the light division marched forty miles in nineteen hours, and bore their extraordinary fatigues with surprising spirit, yet, if they had not lost their way in the wilds, they would have been two hours earlier at the perilous bridge, and none of Reille's division would have escaped.¹

Next day the French troops at all points evacuated the Spanish territory, and both armies resumed nearly the positions they had held before Soult's irruption took place. Before they recrossed the frontier, however, an incident occurred which showed, in a striking manner, how the steadiness of the bravest troops may be shaken, even in a short time, by a series of disasters. Clausel's divisions were the last which remained on the Spanish territory ; and he occupied a strong position, with the rearguard, in the Puerto d'Echalar. Wellington immediately determined to dislodge him ; and for this purpose the fourth division was marched from Yanzi to attack his front, the seventh division against his left, and the light against his right. Barnes' brigade of the seventh division, however, having a shorter distance to march over, arrived on the ground before the other divisions had come

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

¹ Cooke's Narrative, 84, 87. Pelot, 34, 35. Nap. vi. 153, 161. Wellington to Lord Bathurst, 4th August 1813. Gur. x. 597, 598.

34.
Glorious combat at the Puerto d'Echalar, and the rock of Ivantelly.

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

up; they were fifteen hundred against six thousand, and the enemy held a position as strong as the rocks of Soraoren. Such was the spirit, however, with which the British army was now animated, that this handful of heroes actually assaulted and drove the enemy from the rugged heights; amidst the enthusiastic cheers of the whole troops who witnessed this heroic exploit. And yet the French were the same men who, a few days before, had all but won, against similar natural difficulties, the bloody steeps of Soraoren. Clausel's men, thus dislodged, fell back to a strong ridge beyond the pass of Echalar, covered by the Ivantelly rock, which was occupied in force. But they were not permitted to rest in this last position. As evening came on, and a dark mist crowned the cloud-capped summit of the cliff occupied by the French, the riflemen whom Colonel Barnard led to the attack, followed by the 43d, were soon lost to the view; but the sharp clang of musketry resounded among the clouds, and ere long a British shout was heard from the shrouded summit, and the last French were hurled in confusion down the steep from the Spanish soil. After the lapse of ten centuries, the soldiers of Napoleon retired from Spain by the same route as the Paladins of Charlemagne had done.¹

¹ Wellington to Lord Bathurst, 3d August 1813. Gur. x. 597, 598. Nap. vi. 161, 162. Bign. xii. 160.

35.
Result of the battles of the Pyrenees.

The irruption of Soult into the Spanish territory does the highest honour to his persevering character and skill, in the movements of strategy which preceded the final shock; but it may be doubted whether his vigour and firmness at the decisive moment were equal to the ability of his previous conceptions. With an overwhelming force he had thrown himself on the British right, and gained such success, before succour could arrive, that the issue seemed no longer doubtful; when victory was snatched from his grasp, and a succession of disasters were brought on the French arms, attended in the end with the most decisive effects upon the ultimate issue of the war. There can be no doubt that the vigour with which

the stroke, thus happily conceived, was followed up at the decisive moment, was by no means proportioned to the felicity of its original conception. Soult was in front of the rocks of Soraoren with thirty thousand men on the evening of the 26th, when only two divisions, mustering eleven thousand of the Anglo-Portuguese army, were assembled to stop his progress. Had he attacked that night or next day with such a preponderance of force, it can hardly be doubted that he would have succeeded; and, supported by the ramparts of Pampeluna, he might have seen with indifference the arrival of the sixth, and all the subsequent divisions of the British army which came up on the 28th and 29th.

Wellington's right wing was undoubtedly in one sense out-generaled—that is, it was assailed by a force greatly superior to that anticipated, or for which it was prepared—and the troops at the Maya pass were clearly surprised; but this is unavoidable in mountain warfare, where the attacking party may select his own point of onset, and the attacked cannot, from the intervening of ridges, obtain succour till after a long time, and by a painful circuit in the rear; and Soult experienced the same, in his turn, in the forcing of his position shortly after on the Nive. On the other hand, the rapidity with which the British general gathered up all his forces to the menaced point; the firmness with which he held his ground in the first instance against a vast superiority of force; and the admirable combinations by which, in the subsequent advance, he defeated Soult's attempts, and all but made him prisoner with thirty thousand men, are worthy of the highest admiration, and justly place the battles of the Pyrenees among the most brilliant of Wellington's martial achievements. The French loss, from the time of their entering Spain on the 25th July, till their evacuating it, was not less than fifteen thousand men, including four thousand unwounded prisoners;¹ that of the British was seven thousand and ninety-six men,

CHAP.
LXXVII.
1813.

36.
Comparative losses
on both
sides.

¹ Wellington to Sir T. Graham, 4th August 1813. *Gur.* x. 592. *Belm.* i. 265, and to Earl of Liverpool, 4th August 1813. *Gur.* x. 596.

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

of whom four thousand seven hundred and fifty-six were British soldiers. But what is very remarkable, such was the effect of the trumpet of war in bringing back the stragglers, loosened by the Vitoria plunder, to their standards, that the muster-rolls after the battles exhibited only fifteen hundred less than those taken before they commenced.*

37.
Prepara-
tions of the
governor of
San Sebastian during
the suspension of the
siege.

The first object which occupied the attention of the English general after the defeat of Soult's irruption, was the renewal of the siege of San Sebastian, which had been so rudely interrupted. The governor had made good use of the breathing-time thus afforded him by the cessation of active operations, in repairing the breaches in the sea-wall, retrenching the interior parts of the rampart, and taking every imaginable precaution against a second assault. In particular, he had constructed out of the ruins of the houses which had been destroyed, immediately behind the great breach, a second or interior rampart, parallel to the outer, very thick, and fifteen feet high, with salient bastions, which it was hoped would entirely stop the progress of the enemy, even if they won the front wall. During the intermission of active operations, the efforts of the English were confined to a blockade position taken up on the heights of St Bartholomew, which were much strengthened, and a distant fire upon the men engaged in these vast undertakings; and they lost two hundred Portuguese, in a sally made by the garrison in the night of the 26th July.¹

But when Soult was finally driven back, matters soon assumed a very different aspect. The heavy guns which

July 26.
¹ Belm. iv.
630, 634.
Jones's
Sieges, ii.
48, 60.

* "That vain attempt cost the French army nineteen hundred killed, eight thousand five hundred and forty wounded, and two thousand seven hundred prisoners; in all thirteen thousand one hundred men."—BELMAS, *Journaux des Sièges dans la Péninsule*, i. 265. The prisoners taken were really four thousand, which shows that this estimate is in some respects below the truth, though founded on official documents, and probably very near it. See WELLINGTON to LORD LIVERPOOL, 4th August 1815, where he says, "Their loss cannot be less than fifteen thousand, and I am not sure if it is not twenty thousand; we have four thousand prisoners."—GURWOOD, x. 597.

had been shipped at Passages were all re-landed, and again placed in battery; a fleet of transports, with twenty-eight additional pieces of great calibre, and immense stores, arrived from Portsmouth, and they were soon succeeded by as many more from Woolwich; and the battering train, with the guns landed from the ships, now amounted to the large number of a hundred and eighteen pieces, including twelve sixty-eight pounders. By the night of the 25th, this immense train of artillery was all in readiness, and fifty-seven pieces were actually in the batteries. On the morning of the 26th they re-opened their fire with a roar so awful, that, echoed as it was from all the rocks and precipices in the wooded amphitheatre around, it seemed as if no force on earth could withstand the attack. The fire continued without intermission for the next four days, and before the 30th sixty-three guns were in constant practice; two wide breaches were gaping, and seemed easy of ascent; the fire of the place was almost entirely silenced, and three mines had been run in front of the advanced batteries on the isthmus, close under the sea-wall, in order to counteract any mines of the enemy near the great breach. Still the brave governor, after informing Soult of his desperate situation, was resolute to stand a second assault, although his resistance of the first had fulfilled to the letter Napoleon's general orders. The storm was ordered for the 31st at noonday.¹

At two in the morning of the 31st, the three mines were exploded under the sea-wall, and brought it completely down. At this awful signal the brave garrison all repaired to their posts, each armed with several muskets; and, relying on the successful resistance of the former assault, confidently anticipated the defeat of the present. Nor was their confidence without reason; for, notwithstanding the vastly increased means now at the disposal of the besiegers, they had not yet beat down the enemy's parapets, nor established a lodgment in the hornwork; so

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

38.

Renewal of
the siege.
Aug. 19.
Aug. 23.Atlas,
Plate 83.

¹ Jones's
Sieges, ii.
48, 70.
Belm. iv.
630, 638.
Wellington
to Lord Ba-
thurst, Sept.
2, 1813.
Gurw. xi.
61, 62, 63.
Graham's
Official
Account.
Subaltern,
48, 49.

39.

Prepara-
tions for the
assault.

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

that the assaulting columns would be exposed when near the breach to a destructive fire in flank—a fatal error, contrary to Vauban's rules, and the consequences of which were only evaded by the shedding of torrents of British blood. Dissatisfied with the steadiness of some of the men at the former assault, Wellington had brought fifty volunteers from each of fifteen regiments in the first, fourth, and light divisions; "men," as he expressed it, "who could show other troops how to mount a breach." Leith, however, who had resumed the command of the fifth division, by which the former assault had been made, was urgent that his men should be allowed the post of honour; and they were accordingly placed under General Robinson to head the attack, supported by the remainder of the same division, and the seven hundred and fifty volunteers from the other regiments of the army. Major Snodgrass, of the 52d, had on the preceding night forded the Urumea alone, opposite the smaller breach, up which he clambered at midnight, and looked down on the town.¹

¹ Nap. vi.
197, 198.
Gurw. xi.
62, 63.
Gleig's
Subaltern,
51, 53.

40.
Universal
anxiety
which pre-
vailed.

² Gleig's
Subaltern,
51, 54. Nap.
vi. 197, 199.
Graham's
Official
Account,
Gurw. xi.
62, 63.
Jones's
Sieges, ii.
72, 73.

After the troops in the trenches were all under arms, deep anxiety pervaded every bosom; and before orders were given for the forlorn-hope to move forward, the excitement felt had become almost intolerable. The heroic band took its station at half-past ten; the tide, which all watched, was fast ebbing; the enemy's preparations were distinctly visible—the glancing of bayonets behind the parapets, the guns pointed towards the breach, the array of shells and fire-barrels along its summit, told but too clearly the awful contest which awaited them. Little was said in the assaulting columns; the bravest occasionally changed colour; the knees of the most resolute smote each other, not with fear but anxiety; and time seemed to pass with such leaden wings, that the watches were looked to every half minute. Some laughed outright, they knew not why; many addressed a mental prayer to the throne of grace.² The very elements seemed

to have conspired to increase the impressive character of the moment: a close and oppressive heat pervaded the atmosphere, lowering and sulphurous clouds covered the sky, large drops fell at intervals; and the very animals, awe-struck by the feeling of an approaching tempest, were silent in the camp and on the hills.

Eleven had barely passed when, the tide being considered sufficiently fallen, the signal to advance was given. The assaulting column, issuing from the trenches in front of St Catalina, was to advance by the left bank of the Urumea, and between it and the walls of the fortress. They had a hundred and eighty yards to go before they reached the breaches, over rocks slippery with sea-weed, and the open strand. Silently the men moved forward, and not a shot was fired till the column had reached the middle of the space, when such a tempest of grape, musketry, and canister was at once opened upon it, as wellnigh choked the banks of the Urumea with the killed and the wounded. With dauntless intrepidity, however, the survivors pressed on, headed by the gallant Lieutenant M'Guin of the 4th, who led the forlornhope, and rushed on, conspicuous from his plume, noble figure, and buoyant courage. Two mines were exploded rather prematurely by the enemy under the covered way of the hornwork; but they crushed only twenty men, and the column, bounding impetuously forward, streamed up the great breach, and soon reached its summit. There, however, they were assailed by a dreadful tempest of grape, shells, and hand-grenades; while the head of the column found it impossible to get down into the town, as the reverse of the breach consisted of a wall twelve or fourteen feet high, the bottom of which was filled with sword-blades placed erect, and every kind of offensive obstacle. The newly constructed rampart within, and the ruins of the houses burned on occasion of the former assault,¹ were lined with grenadiers, who kept up so close and deadly a fire, that

CHAP.
LXXXVII.
1813.

41.
Dreadful assault of the breaches.

¹ Jones's Sieges, ii. 73, 76. Belm. iv. 639, 640. Gurw. xi. 62. Subaltern, 55, 56.

CHAP.
LXXXVII.

1813.

42.

Which after
a desperate
carnage is
repulsed.

the whole troops who reached the summit were almost instantly struck down.

Still fresh bands pressed on ; the shores of the Urumea were incessantly covered with successive columns hurrying forward to the scene of carnage, until above half of the fifth division was engaged. The volunteers from the different corps, who had with difficulty been restrained, were now let loose, and rushed on, calling out that they would show how a breach should be mounted. Soon the crowded mass made their way up the face of the ruins, won the summit, and with desperate resolution strove to get over by a few ruined walls, which connected the back of the old with the front of the new rampart. Vain attempt ! A steady barrier of steel awaited them on the other side ; the bravest who got across were bayoneted or thrown down into the gulf below. Hand to hand, knee to knee, bayonet to bayonet, the survivors still continued the struggle ; but the resistance was not less determined, and, after two hours of mortal strife, the heroic defenders still made good the dreadful pass, and not a living man was to be seen on the breach. As a last resource, Major Snodgrass, with his Portuguese battalion, volunteered to make a simultaneous assault on the lesser breach. They had to ford the Urumea from the neighbourhood of the Chofre batteries, where it was up to the middle of the men, under a heavy fire of grape from St Elmo, and of musketry from the walls of the town. They bore it, however, without flinching ; the waves of the Urumea were ensanguined with blood without breaking their array ; and they succeeded in reaching the breach they were ordered to attack. But here, too, the slaughter was dreadful. A shower of grape smote the head of the column, and the obstacles proved insuperable, even to the most ardent valour. Matters seemed desperate :—the Urumea was rapidly rising, and would soon become impassable ; the great breach was choked with the dead and the dying ; and already the shouts of victory were heard from the French ramparts.¹

¹ Jones's Sieges, ii. 73, 78. Belm. iv. 639, 641. Rey's Official Account, Ibid. 719, 720. Graham's Official Account, Gurw. xi. 62, 63. Subaltern, 55, 57.

In this extremity, Graham, having consulted with Colonel Dickson of the artillery, adopted one of the boldest, and yet, with his artillerymen, safest expedients recorded in military annals. He ordered that the whole guns of the Chofre batteries should be brought to bear upon the high curtain above the breach in the demi-bastions, from which the most destructive fire issued; while the British soldiers at the foot of the rampart remained quiescent, or lay down, and the shot flew only two feet over their heads. In a few minutes, forty-seven guns were in this manner directed with such effect on the traverses, that they were in a great part broken down, and the troops who manned them were obliged to retire to more distant cover; and yet so accurate was the aim, that not one man among the assailants, lying on their faces, was struck. Twenty minutes after this fire had commenced, one of the shells from the British batteries exploded among the numerous train of fire-barrels, live shells, hand-grenades, and other combustibles, which the garrison had arranged along the ramparts for the close defence of their traverses and interior works; the flame ran along the walls, and the whole exploded with a bright flash, succeeded by a smoke so dense as to obscure all vision. Three hundred brave Frenchmen were blown into the air by this awful catastrophe, which, like the blowing up of the Orient at the Nile, so impressed both sides, that for a minute not a shot was fired either from the ramparts or the batteries.¹

At length, as the smoke and dust cleared away, the British troops, seeing an empty space before them, rushed forward, and with an appalling shout made themselves masters of the first traverse. The defenders, however, even at this terrible moment, soon rallied, and a fierce conflict ensued at the top of the high curtain;* and for

CHAP.
LXXXVII.

1813.

43.
Extraordi-
nary expe-
dient adopt-
ed by
Graham,

1 Jones's
Sieges, ii.
77, 80.
Graham's
Official
Account,
Gurw. xi.
63. Rey's
Official
Account,
Belm. iv.
720; and
Ibid. iv.
641, 643.
Subaltern,
57, 58, Vict.
et Conq.
xxii, 271,
272.

44.
By which
at length
the breac
is won.

* "Anceps pugna diu : stant obnixa omnia contra :
Haud aliter Trojanæ acies, aciesque Latinæ
Concurrunt ; hæret pede pes, densusque viro vir."

Æneid, x. 356.

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

¹ Belm. iv.
641, 643,
720. Jones's
Sieges, ii.
77, 79.
Graham's
Official
Account,
Gurw. xi.
63. Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
271, 272.

some time the result seemed still to be doubtful. At length, the increasing numbers and vehemence of the assailants prevailed over the stern resolution of the besieged. The French colours on the cavalier were torn down by Lieutenant Gethin of the 11th; the hornwork and ravelin on the front of the great breach were abandoned. About the same time, Snodgrass, with his valiant Portuguese, stormed the lesser breach; and the bulk of the garrison, now everywhere overpowered, were rapidly driven from all their interior intrenchments, and sought refuge with the governor in the castle, leaving seven hundred prisoners, rescued from instant death, in the hands of the victors.¹

45.
Disgraceful
excesses in
San Sebastian
after the storm.

And now commenced a scene which has affixed as lasting a stain on the character of the English and Portuguese troops, as the heroic valour they displayed in the assault has given them permanent and exalted fame. The long endurance of the struggle, which had continued in mortal strife for three hours, the fearful slaughter of their comrades which had taken place at the breaches, had wrought the soldiers up to perfect madness; the battle which occurred the same day with the centre and right wing at San Marcial, prevented fresh columns of troops from being introduced, and, as not unusual in such cases, while they spared their enemies who were made prisoners with arms in their hands, the soldiers wreaked their vengeance with fearful violence on the unhappy inhabitants. Some of the houses adjoining the breaches had taken fire from the effects of the explosion; and the flames, fanned by an awful tempest of thunder and lightning, which burst on the town just as the ramparts were carried, soon spread with frightful rapidity. The wretched inhabitants, driven from house to house as the conflagration devoured their dwellings, were soon huddled together in one quarter, where they fell a prey to the unbridled passions of the soldiery. Attempts were at first made by the British officers to extinguish the flames,

CHAP.
LXXVII.
1813.

but they proved vain amidst the general confusion which prevailed ; and soon the soldiers broke into the burning houses, pillaged them of the most valuable articles they contained, and, rolling numerous spirit-casks into the streets, with frantic shouts emptied them of their contents, till vast numbers sank down like savages, motionless, some lifeless, from the excess. Carpets, tapestry, beds, silks, and satins, wearing apparel, jewellery, watches, and everything valuable, were scattered about upon the bloody pavements ; while fresh bundles of them were continually thrown down from the windows above, to avoid the flames, and caught with demoniac yells by the drunken crowds beneath. Amidst these scenes of disgraceful violence and unutterable woe, nine-tenths of the once happy and smiling town of San Sebastian were reduced to ashes ; and—what has affixed a yet darker blot on the character of the victors—deeds of violence and cruelty were perpetrated, hitherto rare in the British army, and which cause the historian to blush, not merely for his country, but for his species.¹

¹ Vict. et
Cong. xxii.
278, 279.
Subaltern,
59, 61. Nap.
vi. 205, 206.
Southey, vi.
240.

Let not the French writers fear that such atrocities will be palliated or excused because they occurred beneath the English standard. Justice knows no distinction of country ; humanity acknowledges no excuse for cruelty ; and they are purposely transcribed from the contemporary records, as a damning blot on the past, and eternal warning to the future.* A consideration of these mournful

46.
Reflections
on these
atrocities.

* “Oh wretched day ! oh cruel night ! The troops seemed to neglect the most ordinary precautions in a place recently taken, and, with one end of it still in the enemy’s hands, to give themselves up to the most unheard-of excesses. Pillage, assassination, rape, were pushed to an incredible pitch : and the fire, which broke out early in the night, after the enemy had retired to the castle, put the finishing stroke to this scene of woe. On all sides were heard cries of distress from women who were violated, without regard either to tender youth, respected family, or advanced years ; wives were outraged in presence of their husbands ; daughters dishonoured in presence of their parents ; one girl was the victim of the brutality of a soldier on the corpse of her mother ! Other crimes more horrible still, which our pen refuses to record, were committed in that awful night ; and the disorders continued for some days after, without any efficient steps being taken to arrest them. Of above six hundred houses

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

scenes, combined with the recollection of the mutual atrocities perpetrated by both parties on each other in England during the wars of the Roses, the horrors of the Tyrone rebellion in Ireland, the cold-blooded vengeance of the Covenanters after the battle of Philiphaugh in Scotland, the systematic firing and pillage of London during Lord George Gordon's riots in 1780, and the brutal violence in recent times of the Chartists in England, suggest the painful doubt whether all mankind are not at bottom the same, in point of tendency to crime, when exposed to the influence of the same temptations; and whether there do not lie, smouldering beneath the boasted glories of British civilisation, the embers of a conflagration as fierce, and devastation as wide-spread, as those which followed and disgraced the French Revolution.

47.
Siege and
capture of
the citadel.

Though the town of San Sebastian was taken, the citadel remained to be reduced; and such was the tenacity and hardihood of the governor and his brave adherents, that, hopeful of deliverance from the effort they were aware Marshal Soult was to make in their favour, they still held out even on that wasted and half-ruined stronghold. The rugged nature of the ground rendered it almost impossible to carry trenches up the rocky face of Monte Orgullo; and the Duke of Berwick in consequence had, in 1719, consumed nineteen days in a bombardment to induce the garrison to surrender. Wellington, however, having visited the works on the 1st September, resolved to push the approaches notwithstanding these

of which San Sebastian consisted on the morning of the assault, there remained at the end of three days only thirty-six."—*Manifeste par la Junte Constitutionale, chapitre ecclésiastique, et les habitants de San Sebastian*—given in *Vict. et Cong.* xxii. 278, 279; and in BELMAS, iv. 469, App. Yet Wellington had done all in his power to save the town; he had purposely avoided a bombardment to spare the citizens; and both he and Graham, as well as the officers engaged, did their utmost to stop the fire, and avoid the disorders; but all their efforts were ineffectual, from the impossibility of bringing up fresh soldiers to occupy the town after the assault, as is usual in such cases, from the employment of the whole troops not engaged in it, on the same day, at the battle on the Bidassoa. —See WELLINGTON to Spanish Minister at War, 17th September 1813; GURWOOD, x. 353.

Sept. 8.

natural obstacles, and at the same time try the effect of a discharge of mortars and a cannonade on the castle. A heavy fire was kept up from mortars till the 8th, when, the breaching batteries from the side of the town having been completed, a tremendous cannonade was opened from sixty pieces of heavy artillery, which played with such effect that everything in the castle was torn up or destroyed by it. The English prisoners suffered even more than the garrison from this terrific tempest; for the governor, now irritated by the sufferings of his followers, would not permit the black flag to be hoisted to avert the fire from the hospital where they were confined. At length this stern but brave man, having exhausted all his means of defence, was obliged to surrender at discretion, with one thousand seven hundred and fifty-six men, including five hundred and thirty-five wounded in the hospital; and the Spanish flag, amidst a salute of twenty-one guns, was hoisted on the citadel.¹

CHAP.
LXXXVII.

1813.

Sept. 9.
1 Jones's
Sieges, ii.
83, 91. Nap.
vi. 207, 209.
Rey's Official Ac-
count, Sept.
7, 1813.
Belm. iv.
739, 742.
Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
281, 282.

The siege of San Sebastian, a third-rate fortress, garrisoned only by three thousand men, hastily got together during the tumult of defeat which succeeded the battle of Vitoria, cost the Allied army three thousand eight hundred men, two thousand five hundred of whom—seventeen hundred and sixteen of these British—were struck down in the final assault;* and it detained the army sixty-three days, of which thirty were with open trenches, and thirty-three blockade. It gave time to Soult to reorganise his army, and make two desperate attacks, one towards Pampeluna, another, which shall be immediately noticed, on the Bidassoa, to re-establish his affairs; and delayed

48.
Reflections
on the siege,
and losses it
occasioned
to the
Allies.

* The French engineer, Belmas, in his elaborate and accurate work on the sieges in the Peninsula, makes the total Allied loss in the siege 5069, and quotes Graham's Despatches for his authority. This, however, is a mistake: the loss of the troops employed in the siege was exactly 3800; and the larger amount is arrived at by the French author including, by mistake, in the returns, the Spaniards, 1436 in number, who were killed and wounded on the 31st August, at the heights of San Marcial on the Bidassoa.—See BELMAS, iv. 728; and GRAHAM'S *Despatches, with the loss in the siege*; GURWOOD, xi. 66, and x. 590; and JONES, ii. 89.

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

¹ Belm. iv.
728. Jones,
ii. 89.

49.
Compara-
tive merit
of the
besiegers
and be-
sieged.

by above three months the invasion of the southern provinces of France. The Allies expended on the siege no less than seventy-one thousand rounds of ammunition, and were obliged to place seventy heavy guns in battery. It must be admitted, that a stronger proof can hardly be imagined of the vital consequence of fortresses in war, or of the decisive effect which the courageous defence even of an inconsiderable stronghold often has upon the fortunes of a campaign, or the fate of a monarchy.¹

The defence of the French governor and garrison was skilful and heroic in the highest degree, and justly entitles them to place their prolonged resistance among the brightest military glories of their country. But notwithstanding all their exertions, the place must have fallen in half the time, if it had not been for obvious faults, both in the conduct of the siege, and in those who had the direction of forwarding supplies to carry it on, from Great Britain. The first assault in July should have succeeded, and would have done so, if the troops who composed the rear of the column had duly followed the advance of their heroic leaders. The last assault was rendered so murderous as it was, chiefly because the engineers had not adopted the precaution of knocking away the parapets of the traverses which commanded the breach, before they declared it practicable ; and of the facility with which this might have been done, and the vast effects with which it was attended, decisive proof is to be found in the statement of Colonel Jones—"That the tremendous enfilade fire on the high curtain, while the troops were at the foot of the breach, though only maintained for twenty minutes, had dismounted every gun but two. Many of the pieces had their muzzles shot away ; the stone parapets were damaged ; the cheeks of the embrasures knocked off ; and the terrepleine cut up and strewn with headless bodies."²

² Jones's
Sieges, ii.
89.

But, more than all, the authorities at home were to blame for not sending out military stores in time to carry

on the siege. They were written for in the end of June by Wellington, but did not arrive till the 18th and 23d August; and it was this long delay which enabled the governor to erect those formidable interior retrenchments which proved so fatal to the Allies in the second assault. They were found to be in profusion, indeed, when they did arrive, but it was too late; the enemy had turned to too good purpose the prolonged delay thus afforded him.* Men could not be more zealous than the British government were at this period in the prosecution of the contest, and none ever made such stupendous efforts to carry it on as they did in this year. But they were still insensible, notwithstanding all the disasters which neglect of it had formerly occasioned, to the value of time in war; and exhibited, in their best combinations, too much of the character of their Saxon ancestors, of whom Athelstane the Unready is the true representative. So frequently has this ignorance of the simplest principles of military combination, and, above all, of the vital importance of time in war, on the part of government, marred the greatest efforts, or disconcerted the best-laid enterprises of the British nation, that it deserves the serious consideration of all those who have the direction of the studies of youth, whether some instruction on the subject should not form part of elementary education to all those at least who are likely, from their station or prospects, to be called to the supreme direction of affairs.

* Wellington remonstrated again and again in the most energetic terms against this inexplicable delay in forwarding supplies. "Your Lordship will see by my report that we are still waiting for the battering-train, and we have thus lost sixteen days in the month of August, since I should have renewed the attack upon San Sebastian if I had had the means. This is a most important period in the campaign, particularly for the attack of a place in the Bay of Biscay. How we are to attack Bayonne afterwards, I am sure I do not know. A British minister cannot too often have under his view the element by which he is surrounded, and cannot make his preparations for the operations of a campaign at too early a period."—WELLINGTON to LORD BATHURST, 18th August 1813; GURWOOD, xi. 12.

"In the attack of a maritime place, some assistance is usually received from the navy by the army; but the naval force on the coast is too weak to give us any of the description I require, and for the want of which we shall now be so

CHAP.
LXXXVII.

1813.

50.
Delay in
sending out
stores for
the siege
from Eng-
land.

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

51.

Soult's at-
tempt to
raise the
siege.

Soult was not unmindful of his promise to attempt a serious diversion for the relief of the distressed garrison of San Sebastian. Before daylight on the 30th August, he crossed the Bidassoa by the fords between the destroyed bridge on the great road and Andara, with Villatte's and Reille's corps, mustering eighteen thousand combatants ; while Clausel, with twenty thousand men, was concentrated in the woods behind the Bayonette mountain ; and Foy, with seven thousand, was ready to support the attack. Little ground required to be gained to raise the siege ; for it was only eight miles from the point of passage to Oyarzun, from whence the invading force might at once advance upon the rear of the besiegers. Notwithstanding all the secrecy of his preparations, however, Wellington received intimation of his designs, and made his dispositions accordingly. Reinforcements to the amount of five thousand men had arrived from England, including the brigade of Guards which had just come up from Oporto ; and the greater part of the stragglers from Vitoria had now rejoined their colours, so that the army was stronger than it had been before the battles in the Pyrenees. But though he brought up the British troops to the close vicinity of the scene of action, so as to be ready to support their allies in case of any disaster, he wisely determined to make a trial of the Spaniards, in a strong position, to guard the entrance into their own

much distressed. The soldiers are obliged to work in the transports, to unload the vessels, because no seamen can be furnished ; and we have been obliged to use the harbour-boats of Passages, *navigated by women*, in landing the ordnance and stores, because there was no naval force to supply us with the assistance we should have required in boats. If we had a sufficient naval force, we might, if the weather permitted, make an attack from the sea at the same time that we should make the attack upon the breaches from the land. This would at all events divide the enemy's attention, and would probably prevent much of the loss in the assault of the breaches, if it did not tend to insure the success of the assault. If the navy of Great Britain cannot afford more than *one frigate and a few brigs and cutters*, fit and used only to carry despatches, to co-operate with this army in the siege of a maritime place, the possession of which before the bad season commences is important to the army as well as the navy, I must be satisfied, and do the best I can without such assistance."—WELLINGTON to LORD BATHURST, 19th August 1813 ; GURWOOD, xi. 1819.

territory. With this view, he stationed the troops of that nation, composing the fourth army, about eighteen thousand strong, on the heights of SAN MARCIAL, on the southern side of the Bidassoa, already memorable from a severe action between the Spaniards and French in the beginning of the revolutionary war.¹ Longa's men were in reserve at a little distance in the rear, with the Portuguese of the fourth division, and the British brigades of the same division, and those of the first division, ready to support them. Thus nearly thirty thousand men in all might be brought to stop the progress of the enemy ; but the unusual gallantry and steadiness of the Spanish troops rendered all assistance needless, and left them the whole weight and glory of the fight.²

Though Soult's troops were collected on the 30th, it was not till the 31st that the attack was made. At day-break on that morning, Reille's columns crossed by the fords above Biriatu, and soon got footing on the opposite bank, where they made themselves masters, without much difficulty, of a small battery. But when they came to ascend the opposite hill, which is there covered with brushwood, and is uncommonly steep, they fell into disorder, and, before they could recover themselves, were charged by the Spaniards, who, in firm array, descended upon them with such vigour that they were driven headlong down. During this conflict, the French had succeeded in throwing a bridge across, under cover of some guns they had placed on the heights on their own side, about a mile further up ; and Villatte's reserve advanced to the support of their defeated comrades. Encouraged by this assistance, Reille's men again advanced to the charge ; and one brigade even succeeded in gaining the chapel of San Marcial on the summit at the left of the line, upon which Wellington ordered up the 85th regiment to repel the attack, and himself rode forward with his staff toward the menaced point. Upon seeing him, the Spanish troops, without waiting for the English succour

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

¹ *Ante*, ch. xiii. § 80.
² *Tor.* v. 324, 325.
Nap. vi. 221, 225.
Vict. et Conq. xxii. 274. Wellington to Lord Bathurst, 2d Sept. 1813.
Gurw. xi. 67.

52.
Defeat of the French by the Spaniards at San Marcial.
Aug. 31.

CHAP.
LXXXVII.

1813.

which was approaching, set up a loud shout, and, rallying on their own reserve, which was brought up, returned to the charge, and dashed the French down the hill so vehemently, that they were in great part driven into the river, and several pontoon boats which had come across were sunk by the fugitives who crowded into them. Thus the Spaniards had the glory, which Wellington carefully acknowledged, of defeating, by their unaided efforts, an attack by a powerful body of the enemy. At the same time Clausel crossed over higher up, near Vera, with three divisions, and immediately commenced an attack on Inglis' and a Portuguese brigade. The latter were driven, by the vast superiority of the enemy's force, from the heights which they at first occupied ; but they rallied on those of San Antonio, which they succeeded in maintaining ; and Wellington, having brought up Kempt's brigade to their support, ordered Dalhousie to advance in the same direction, who sent forward Barnes' brigade before daylight next morning. Clausel, upon this, fearful of having his retreat cut off, fell back across the river on the following morning, by forcing the bridge of Vera, of which the Allies had regained possession. Meanwhile Soult, despairing of success, drew back his forces at all points on the same day, and with no small difficulty and heavy loss, in consequence of the swelling of the river by the dreadful tempest which came on at night, regained the French side of the Bidassoa.¹

¹ Wellington to Lord Bathurst, 1st Sept. 1813. *Gur.* xi. 71. *Nap.* vi. 233. *Pellot*, 52.

53.
Results of
this action.

In this untoward affair Soult lost about three thousand six hundred men, including General Vandermaens killed, and four other generals of inferior note wounded. The Allied loss was two thousand six hundred and eighty-three, of which no less than one thousand six hundred and eighty were Spaniards—a clear proof that with them had rested the burden and glory of the day. But what was of far more importance, the French weakness was now clearly demonstrated to both armies ; their inability to keep the field established by decisive evidence ; and

the spirit of the Spanish troops greatly augmented by having defeated them, unsupported, in a pitched battle. On the very day on which the whole efforts of the French general, with all his disposable forces, had been in this manner defeated by a part only of the Allied army, San Sebastian had fallen before the assault of the British soldiery ; and as Marshal Soult, from the heights on the north of the Bidassoa, which still bear the name of Louis XIV., beheld, amidst the whirlwind tempest which fell upon his retreating columns, the destruction of all his hopes of offensive warfare, he could in the distance perceive the glancing of the fires and the volumes of smoke, which, like a burning volcano, bespoke at San Sebastian the fatal termination of the assault.¹

CHAP.
LXXVII.
1813.

¹ Vict. et
Conq. xxii.
274. Belm.
i. 296. Pel-
lot, 52, 53.
Wellington
to Lord Ba-
thurst, 1st
Sept. 1813.
Gurw. xi.
71. Nap. vi.
233, 234.

The national historians of Spain and Great Britain differ widely, and will probably always differ, as to the degree of merit to be assigned to the efforts of their respective nations for the deliverance of the Peninsula ; and the French military writers, more jealous of the fame of the descendants of those who fought at Cressy and Azincour, than of the comparatively dim light of Spanish glory, are anxious to ascribe it chiefly to the consuming effects of the guerilla warfare. Perhaps the English military annalists—those especially who were actually engaged in the conflict, and witnessed the innumerable defeats of the Spanish armies, and the unworthy jealousy with which they were actuated, both towards the generals and troops of this country—have gone into the other extreme, and both unduly overlooked the patriotic ardour, and underrated the military influence of the indomitable spirit of hostility to French aggression, which for so long a period animated a large portion of the Peninsular people. Impartial justice will ascribe to both their due share in this glorious deliverance. It must admit that the power of Spain was utterly prostrated until England entered as a principal into the strife, and that the prolonged resistance of its people was mainly

54.
Comparative
merit
of Great
Britain and
Spain in the
Peninsular
struggle.

CHAP.
LXXVII.

1813.

owing to the necessity imposed by Wellington's victories of concentrating the French troops on the Portuguese frontier. But it must, at the same time, acknowledge that, notwithstanding all the heroism of the Anglo-Portuguese army, and all the ability of its chief, it never could have effected the deliverance of the Peninsula against the forces, generally three, often four times superior, of the French empire, unless the indomitable perseverance and resolute hostility of the Spanish character had come to their aid, by the distraction which they occasioned to the French armies.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

CHARACTERS OF NAPOLEON, MURAT, NEY, AND BERTHIER.

HISTORICAL narrative, how important or interesting soever the events may be which it embraces, is not the species of composition which gives the best insight into the characters of the actors in the scenes it records. General causes are there too much wound up with personal agency ; the stream of human transaction is too vast, its floods too overwhelming, to permit the salient points of individual disposition to be adequately developed, even in those who have been chiefly instrumental in directing its current. It is private incident which portrays the real man : it is in the habits of domestic life that we are to seek the true touchstone both of the greatness and the weakness of humanity. The common maxim, that no man is a hero to his *valet-de-chambre*, indicates the universal concurrence of all ages in this truth. The characters in public life, accordingly, which are most deeply engraven on the memory of mankind, are not those by whom the most important changes in history have been wrought, but those of whom the most graphic and touching incidents have been recorded by writers of capacity sufficient to discern their value. The heroes of antiquity, after the lapse of two thousand years, still seem present to our imagination ; but if we examine the elements of which the still living phantoms are composed, we shall find that, while their great and important exploits are recollected

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

1.

Importance
of personal
anecdote in
the delineation
of character.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

only in a sort of shadowy grandeur, it is the incidents of their private life, the generosity of their individual actions, which are really enshrined in our memory; and that it is not so much even the pictured pages of Livy, Xenophon, and Quintus Curtius, as the lives of Plutarch, which have given them immortality. In modern times, it is the Richard III. and Henry VIII. of Shakspeare, not those of history, who recur to every mind when our kings of the olden time are thought of; it is the Johnson of Boswell, not the author of the Rambler, or the learned lexicographer, who is present to every reader. And so feeble is the impression produced by real generalities, in comparison of fictitious details, that even the valour of Richard Cœur-de-Lion, the beauty of Queen Mary, and the tyranny of Louis XI., are retained in our recollection chiefly by the enchanting or powerful colours in which their characters have been drawn by the imaginative pencils of Schiller and Sir Walter Scott.

2.
Rich materials, in this respect, which exist regarding Napoleon.

Perhaps there is no illustrious man, ancient or modern, of whom such ample details exist in these respects as Napoleon; and though they have been disfigured, in too many instances, by the enthusiastic partiality or interested flattery of one set of writers, and the coarse invective or profound hatred of another, yet it is not impossible for an attentive observer to distinguish the true from the false, even in these exaggerated statements. An experienced draughtsman has no difficulty in separating sketches from nature from imaginary conceptions, even of scenes which he has never himself visited; and those who have made themselves familiar with the peculiar and strongly marked traits of that wonderful man's character, will seldom be at a loss to distinguish the real from the fictitious anecdotes which have been preserved concerning him. The reader, therefore, will probably not regret the pains, nor deem them misplaced, if advantage is taken of the pause in military operations which resulted from the armistice of Pleswitz, to throw together some of the most

graphic and characteristic details which exist, furnished by eye-witnesses, of a man whose name will ever occupy the most conspicuous place in the annals of modern times.

CHAP.
LXXXVIII.
1813.

What renders the traits of Napoleon's character improbable, and at times almost incredible to an ordinary observer, is the opposite and apparently irreconcilable features of disposition to which they point. Those who are familiar, on the other hand, with the leading principles and ruling objects of his mind, and have arrived at the secret clue which reconciles its seeming inconsistencies, will regard them as in a peculiar manner characteristic, and find additional evidence of the authenticity of anecdotes descriptive of such a disposition, in the very variety which appears at first sight so perplexing. He united, to a degree which was perhaps never before equalled, the ardent and impassioned temperament of southern, with the cool judgment and intellectual force of northern Europe. It is hard to say whether he was most distinguished by the admirable knowledge which he possessed of the grand and elevated in human conduct, and by the heart-stirring use he could at all times make of appeals to the most generous feelings of our nature, or by the total disregard of every moral obligation or disinterested virtue, which he invariably displayed when his own interest appeared to be in any degree thwarted by a due observance of them. He was not by disposition a cruel, nor by nature a bad man ; that is, the wicked or savage principles were not in any extraordinary degree developed in his character. It was by the entire absence of any moral control, when his interest was concerned, that he was principally distinguished. Those who were around him spoke of his "iron will" as the leading feature of his character, and there can be no doubt that this was the case. Fixity of purpose, and disregard of moral obligation, when they interfered in any degree with it, were his great characteristics ; and such was the force of

3.
General
character
of Napo-
leon's mind.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

4.
Singular
combination
of good and
bad quali-
ties which
he possess-
ed.

his mind, that what he willed he seldom failed to attain. He thus inspired the idea that he was the man of destiny, and that his determinations were the decrees of fate.

Yet this absence of all moral control did not by any means render his life a mere tissue of bad actions; nor was it inconsistent on many occasions with noble deeds, humane feelings, and beneficent intentions. He was too clear-sighted not to perceive that such conduct was, in the general case, the most judicious; he knew well that vindictive cruelty usually defeats its own object; and that the only solid foundation for the attachment of subjects to a sovereign, is to be found in a sedulous protection of their interests. But the grand and peculiar characteristic of his mind was, that all this was done, not because he felt it to be right, but because he saw it to be expedient: his ruling principle was interest invariably followed, not duty perseveringly performed. Accordingly, whenever he perceived, or thought he perceived a conflict between these rules of conduct, he never hesitated an instant to give the preference to the selfish considerations—or rather, his mind was so entirely governed by their influence, that he never experienced, on such occasions, any mental conflict at all. Yet so strongly did his clear intellect perceive the connexion, even in this world, between virtue and expedience, generosity and influence, that few men, when not perverted by the suggestions of selfishness, have done more evincing an elevated disposition. But when a collision between the two arose, he always inclined to the side of interest. He often said that Corneille was the only man who understood the art of government, and that, if he had lived in his age, he would have made him a privy councillor;¹ * and the

¹ Las Cases, iv. 372. De Stael, Dix Ann. d'Exil, 102.

* Perhaps Napoleon had in view in this opinion the celebrated lines on the death of Pompey, of the Egyptian counsellor:—

“La justice n'est pas une vertu d'état.

Le choix des actions, ou mauvaises ou bonnes,

Ne fait qu'anéantir la force des couronnes;

Le droit des rois consiste à ne rien épargner;

La timide équité détruit l'art de régner;

reason was, that while he thoroughly understood, and has nobly expressed, the most elevated sentiments, he always assigned the superior place to reasons of state policy—in other words, considerations of real or supposed expedience. This distinction, which never perhaps was so clearly defined in any human being before his time, furnishes the true key to the otherwise inexplicable character of Napoleon ; and demonstrates that there is much truth, both in the obloquy which has been thrown upon him by his enemies, and in the eulogies which have been pronounced on him by his friends.

If we contemplate him in one point of view, never was any character recorded in history more worthy of universal detestation. We behold a single individual, for the purposes of his own ambition, consigning whole generations of men to an untimely grave, desolating every country of Europe by the whirlwind of conquest, and earning the support and attachment of his own subjects, by turning them loose to plunder and oppress all mankind. In the prosecution of these objects, we see him deterred by no difficulties, daunted by no dangers, bound by no treaties, restrained by no pity ; regardless alike of private honour and public faith ; prodigal at once of the blood of his people and the property of his enemies ; indifferent equally to the execrations of other nations and the exhaustion of his own. We perceive a system of government at home based upon force, and resting upon selfishness, which supported religion only because it was useful, and spoke of justice only because it was expedient ; which at once extinguished freedom and developed talent ; which dried up the generous feelings by letting them wither in obscurity, and ruled mankind by the selfish, by affording them unbounded gratification ; which made use

CHAP.
LXXVIII.
1813.

5.
Clue which
is afforded
to his cha-
racter by
his bad
qualities.

Quand on craint d'être injuste, on a toujours à craindre ;
Et qui veut tout pouvoir doit oser tout enfreindre,
Fuir comme un déshonneur la vertu qui le perd,
Et voler sans scrupule au crime qui le sert."¹

CORNEILLE, *Pompeé*, Act i. scene 1.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

of the noble feelings in others to advance the purposes of the interested in himself. We see a man of consummate abilities, wielding unlimited powers for the purposes of individual advancement; straining national resources for the fostering of general corruption; destroying the hopes of future generations in the indulgence of the present; constantly speaking of disinterested virtue, and seldom practising it; perpetually appealing to the generous affections, and ever guided by the selfish; everlastingly condemning want of truth in others, yet daily promulgating falsehoods among his subjects, with as little hesitation as he discharged grape-shot among his enemies.*

6.
And his
good and
great quali-
ties.

If we regard him in another view, we shall be led to form a very different estimate of his character. Never were talents of the highest order, genius of the most exalted kind, more profusely bestowed upon a human being, or worked out to greater purposes of good or evil. Gifted at once with a clear intellect, a vivid imagination, and a profound judgment—burning with the fervent passions and poetic glow of Italy, and yet guided by the highest reasoning and reflecting powers; at once an enthusiastic student of the exact sciences, and a powerful mover of the generous affections; imbued with the soul of eloquence, the glow of poetry, and the fire of imagination—he yet knew how to make all these powers subservient to the directions of sagacious reason, and the dictates of extensive observation. He was illustrious not merely on account of his vast military achievements, but of his varied and often salutary civil efforts. He was not a great man because he was a great general: he was a

* ——— “Sed non in Cæsare tantum
Nomen erat, nec fama ducis; sed nescia virtus
Stare loco; solusque pudor non vincere bello:
Acer, et indomitus, quo spes, quoque ira vocâsset,
Ferre manum, et nunquam temerando parcere ferro;
Successus urgere suos; instare favori
Numinis; impellens quidquid sibi summa petenti
Obstaret; gaudensque viam fecisse ruinâ.”

LUCAN, *Pharsalia*, i. 143.

great general because he was a great man. The prodigious capacity and power of attention which he brought to bear on the direction of his campaigns, and which produced such astonishing results, were but a part of the general talents which he possessed, and which were not less conspicuous in every other department, whether of government or abstract thought. It was hard to say whether he was greatest in laying down strategetical plans for the general conduct of a campaign, or in seizing the proper direction of an attack on the field of battle, or in calculating the exact moment when his reserves could be most effectively employed. And those who are struck with astonishment at the immense information and just discrimination which he displayed at the council-board, and the varied and important public improvements which he set on foot in every part of his dominions, will form a most inadequate conception of his mind, unless they are at the same time familiar with the luminous and profound views which he threw out on the philosophy of politics, in the solitude of St Helena. Never was evinced a clearer proof of the truth which a practical acquaintance with men must probably have impressed upon every observer, that talent of the highest order is susceptible of any application ; and that accident or Supreme direction alone determines whether its possessor is to become a Homer, a Bacon, or a Napoleon.

It would require the observation of a Thucydides, directing the pencil of a Tacitus, to portray by a few touches such a character ; and modern idiom, even in their hands, would probably have proved inadequate to the task. Equal to Alexander in military achievement, superior to Justinian in legal reformation, sometimes second only to Bacon in political sagacity, he possessed at the same time the inexhaustible resources of Hannibal, and the administrative powers of Cæsar. Enduring of fatigue, patient of hardship, unwearied in application, no difficulties could deter, no dangers daunt, no obstacles

CHAP.
LXXVIII.
1813.

7.
His general
character.

CHAP.
LXXXVIII.

1813.

impede him ; a constitution of iron, a mind superior to physical suffering, enabled him to brave alike the sun of Egypt and the snows of Russia. Indefatigable in previous preparation, he was calm and collected in the moment of danger ; often on horseback for eighteen hours together, and dictating almost the whole night to his secretaries, he found a brief period for slumber during the roar of the battle, when the enemy's balls were falling around him.* Nor was peace a period of repose to his genius, nor the splendour of courts a season merely of relaxation. His habits of application appeared early in life : he often said that from the time he left school, he never worked less than sixteen hours a-day. Though not insensible to the attractions of courts, though often indulging for a moment in their vices, he was never the slave of their pleasures ; female charms exerted only a transient sway over his passions, and never clouded his reason ; and when surrounded by the pomp of a king of kings, he was unceasingly employed in conducting the thread of interminable negotiations, or stimulating the progress of beneficent undertakings. He was too great a man to be ashamed of, or attempt to conceal his origin ; and said to his brother Joseph on occasion of his coronation as Emperor,—“ Joseph, if our father could see us ! ” He possessed the simplicity of mind which is the almost inviolable attendant on real greatness ; and at the highest period of his elevation was to be seen playing at soldiers with mannikins in uniform with the King of Rome, or almost dropping down with laughter at the terror of Maria Louisa on horseback, when she was beginning, under his tuition, to learn to ride.¹

¹ Meneval, iii. 4, 5 ; and i. 130, 318, 321.

* At the battle of Bautzen, Napoleon, who was extremely fatigued by the exertions of the two preceding days, and almost entire want of rest during the night, more than once fell asleep when seated on an eminence overlooking the field, which the enemy's cannon-balls frequently reached. He said, nature had her rights, which could not be violated with impunity, and that he felt more cool to give fresh orders, or consider the reports he received, when awakening in this manner from a transient slumber.—ODEL. i. 90, 91 ; LAS CASES, ii. 409 ; and FAIN, i. 411.

"Has tantas viri virtutes ingentia vitia æquabant :—inhumana crudelitas, perfidia plus quam Punica ; nihil veri, nihil sancti, nullus deorum metus, nullum jusjurandum, nulla religio."* Brave without being chivalrous ; sometimes humane, seldom generous ; vehement in anger, yet often forgiving on reflection ; implacable in political hatred, but not insensible to hostile esteem ; inexorable in general measures, yet susceptible of individual pity ; wound up in his own elevation, yet ever identifying it with the glory of France ; regardless alike of crime or suffering in the path of ambition, yet not addicted to either if uncalled for by private interest or state policy—he could at once call his conscripts food for cannon, and boast that he could afford to spend ten thousand of them a-day, and yet bind up the wounds of individual suffering, or sacrifice his carriages to wounded valour. In one respect only he was altogether implacable—and that was towards persons whose services to himself threatened to interfere with the supremacy of his achievements, or whose enmity had proved an impediment to his ambition. He never forgave Moreau the victory of Hohenlinden, which saved France ; nor Kellermann the charge at Marengo, which fixed himself on the consular throne ; † nor Wellington the determined opposition which at last hurled him to destruction.‡

Generosity with him was often admirably assumed, and, when not interfering with selfishness, really felt ; but

* "Those great virtues were equalled by as great vices :—inhuman cruelty, perfidy more than Punic ; no truth, no piety, no fear of the gods, no regard to an oath, no religion."—LIVY, lib. xxi. c. 4.

† "A un Re qual puossi
Piu oltraggio far, che averlo posto in seggio ?
Tor puo il regno chi l'diede, et chi il puo torre
S'odia et spegne dai Re."

ALFIERI, *Maria Stuardo*, Act i. scene 1.

‡ So true are the words of Corneille which he adopted :

"Quand un homme une fois a droit de nous haïr,
Nous devons présumer qu'il cherche à nous trahir :
Toute son amitié nous doit être suspecte."

Polyeucte, Act v. scene 1.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

9.

His mixture
of generosity
and selfish-
ness.

forgetfulness of self never marked his actions for any length of time. When the impulse of the moment was over, or the object of the acting had ceased, egotism never failed to reappear in undiminished ascendancy, and dispelled in a moment the pleasing illusion. He was capable of the heroic but politic self-denial of Alexander, which, by pouring the untasted cup of water on the sands of Arabia, assuaged the thirst of a whole army; but the designless magnanimity which put the draught to the lips of the Macedonian hero, when the physician was reading the denouncing letter, was beyond his reach. He could imitate Themistocles in surrendering himself, as he himself said, to "the greatest, the most powerful, and the most persevering of his enemies;" but he would never, like him, have swallowed poison to avoid being called on to elevate himself at the expense of his country. The man who shunned death at Waterloo, after he had himself told his army that "the hour had arrived when it behoved every Frenchman who loved his country to conquer or die," had no hesitation in bequeathing a legacy in his will to the assassin who had attempted the life of the Duke of Wellington. He condemned the execution of Louis, because it was a political error; but he hesitated not to murder the Duc d'Enghien, because it seemed a political advantage. He loudly denounced the alleged perfidy of the English attack on a neutral power at Copenhagen; but he scrupled not to seize the whole fortresses and royal family of Spain, in violation of a strict alliance, when it gave him a throne. Inflexibility of will, and an unbounded thirst for aggrandisement, were his great characteristics; and though he undoubtedly felt the influence of the generous affections, and often acted on their impulse, he never on one single occasion, or for one single instant, let them interfere with these ruling principles. His character cannot be better summed up than in the words in which profound reflection has enabled genius to define Satan,—

"He was the perfection of intellect without moral principle."*

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

10.

It arose
partly from
the vices and
irreligion of
the Revolution.

Great part, however, of the selfishness which formed so important a feature, and damning a blot, in the character of Napoleon, is to be ascribed not so much to himself as to the age in which he lived, and the people whom he was called upon to rule. Born and bred in the most corrupted society of Europe, during the irreligious fanaticism, general license, and universal egotism of the Revolution, he saw no other way of governing his subjects but by constantly appealing to their interest ; and was led to believe, from what he saw around him, that selfishness was the prime mover and universal spring of mankind. That it is so in the long run at all times, and among all people, to a great degree, no one experienced in the ways of men will probably doubt. But religious truth reveals the simultaneous agency of higher principles ; and historical observation loudly proclaims that many of the most important changes in human annals have been brought about in direct opposition to its dictates. It was ignorance or oblivion of those counteracting agencies which was the grand error of Napoleon's life, and beyond all doubt brought about his fall. The Revolution misled him by establishing the fatal principle, that no other test is to be applied to human actions but success ; the prevailing irreligion of the age misled him, by spreading the belief that worldly prosperity is at once the chief good in life, and the only rational object of human pursuit.

To rouse exertion by the language of virtue, and direct it to the purposes of vice, was the grand principle of the Revolution, and the immediate cause of its triumphs. The Emperor felt that he had at no time a chance of success but by yielding to its impulse ; and at all times he

11.

He personified its ruling principle.

* An expression of my highly esteemed friend the Rev. Robert Montgomery, formerly rector of St Jude's, Glasgow, now incumbent of Percy Chapel, London, whose genius as a poet conveys an inadequate idea of his eloquence as a preacher, and fervour as a minister of religion, in a depraved manufacturing community, where Christian zeal has so wide a field for exertion.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

could almost command events by wielding it for his advantage. Instead, therefore, of considering Napoleon as an individual man, and striving to reconcile the opposite qualities of his character, or harshly condemning its darker features, it is more consonant both to historic truth and impartial justice to regard him as the personification of the principles which at that period were predominant in his country—as the INCARNATION OF THE LAST STAGE OF THE REVOLUTION; and perhaps no Avatar, sent on such a mission, could have been imbued with fewer vices. In this view, we may look upon the contest in which he was engaged as the same in sublunary affairs with that awful struggle darkly shadowed forth in Revelation, to which the pencil of Milton has given the form and force of terrestrial reality; and may view his fall as demonstrating the same Supreme direction of events which, permitting for a season, for inscrutable purposes, the agency of sin, doomed to final ruin the Prince of the Morning.

12.
Inconceivable peculiarities of his character.

Yet, even after making every allowance for the demoralising influence of these circumstances, there are some peculiarities in the character of Napoleon which are almost inexplicable, and which demonstrate the justice of Johnson's observation, that no man ever rose from an inferior station to the government of mankind, in whom great and commanding qualities were not blended with certain meannesses that would be inconceivable in ordinary men. Great as was his penetration, profound the sagacity of his political reflection, he yet deliberately based his throne upon the systematic oppression of all other nations by one; and seriously believed that he needed not to disquiet himself about the results, so long as, under the stimulus of glory and victory, he let loose his own subjects to plunder and insult every people over whom they ruled. He could survey past events with an eye seldom equalled in the justice of its observation: yet he throughout life acted upon the principle, that falsehood

was not only no crime, but no error ; that mankind could be permanently misled by the reiterated assertions of bought mendacity, and truth finally extirpated by the rude bayonets of despotic power. He was often generous to those around him, and munificent in his gifts to individual men ; but yet his public conduct was invariably characterised by the most grasping disposition, and his government, in all countries but his own, nothing but an organised system of universal rapine. He often gave money with a liberal hand to objects of charity ; but he never forgave those who asked it as a matter of business. His liberality was that of the captain of robbers who divides among his band the fruits of their plunder, but he never failed to keep the lion's share to himself ; and he contrived during his reign to amass, chiefly by selling licenses, in direct violation of his own Continental System, a treasure of three hundred millions of francs (£12,000,000) in the vaults of the Tuileries. His invariable answer, when applied to by his generals for money, was, that he had none to give ; and his first instructions to them were, to maintain themselves in the countries where they were quartered, and above all things, not to come to him for money.^{1*}

That salient energy, that living principle, which has hitherto always enabled Europe at length to dispel the illusions which had benighted, or throw off the oppression which had crushed it, never appears to have entered into his calculations : that retributive justice which so often, in this world, dooms enormous sin to work out its own punishment, never crossed his imagination. Though he committed, in the course of his career, many great crimes, and still more evident faults, he appeared to the very last to have been altogether insensible both to the

CHAP.
LXXVIII.
1813.

¹ Thiers's
Cons. et
l'Emp. viii.
633. Mene-
val, i. 285,
286, 296.

13.
His entire
insensibility
to his own
faults.

* "Napoléon, craignant de dissiper un trésor qu'il destinait à récompenser l'armée en cas de prospérité soutenue, où à créer des grandes ressources défensives en cas de revers, lui avait répondu qu'il n'avait point d'argent : *réponse qu'il faisait toujours quand on s'adressait à lui, à moins qu'il ne s'agit d'œuvres de bienfaisance.*"—THIERS, *Consulat et l'Empire*, viii. 633.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

one and the other ; and he repeatedly said at St Helena, that, with the exception of the invasion of Spain, he never fell into a political mistake, and on no one occasion was ever guilty of a political delinquency. Nay, he went so far as to assert, on repeated occasions, that he would present himself without fear or disquietude before his Maker, to give an account of his actions.* His conduct and language regarding himself would lead us to suspect at times that he had been born without a conscience, or that its voice had been entirely extinguished by the effects of early education, did not his measures on various occasions prove that he was not insensible to humane and elevated sentiments, and his language on all, afford decisive evidence that no man was better qualified to detect the slightest deviation from rectitude in the conduct of his opponents.

14.
The despotic
nature of
his system
of govern-
ment.

Though his capacity in forming political designs, and even more so in carrying them into effect, was seldom surpassed, yet in his general views of policy he was far from being guided by enlarged principles, and still farther from acting consistently in the measures requisite for their execution. Self, there as elsewhere, formed the ruling principle and great blot in his character. Universal empire was the avowed object to which his life was devoted ; but, supposing such a design practicable, he adopted the means of all others the least fitted to carry it into effect. The magnanimous yet wise policy of consulting the interests, and bending to the prejudices of the conquered states, by which the Romans obtained the empire of the world in ancient, and the English the supremacy in Hindostan in modern times, never entered into his imagination. To concentrate the world in Europe, Europe in France, France in Paris, and Paris in himself,

* "C'est avec une conviction profonde qu'il a dit, qu'il se présenterait avec assurance devant le tribunal de Dieu, et qu'il attendrait sans crainte son jugement."—*Souvenirs Historiques de Napoleon, par le BARON MENEVAL, son Ancien Secrétaire*, i. 294.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.
1813.

was the perpetual object of his ambition. Nor was it only over the bodies and properties of men that he proposed to establish this extraordinary dominion : chains still more durable, because less immediately galling, were prepared by him for their minds and thoughts. He laboured assiduously to transfer the seat of the papal power to the French capital, in order to gain possession of the vast influence which it still maintained over the faithful in every part of Europe ; while, by a deep-laid and comprehensive system of secular education, he strove to mould according to his will that far more powerful portion of the people in his own country, who looked only to temporal advancement, and were swayed by nothing but temporal ambition. Thus, while he professed, and perhaps believed himself to be the man of the age, and the child of the Revolution, he ran directly contrary to the professed tenets of its supporters ; or rather, he correctly discerned their real motives, and worked with perfect sagacity, to its natural result and termination, a system which, based exclusively on the selfish passions, was liable to be destroyed by their gratification, and which, subverting the influence of moral principle, left no other regulator for mankind but physical force.

The oppressive government and centralised despotism of Napoleon, therefore, were so far from being a deviation from the character, or a divergence from the principles of the Revolution, that they were the obvious completion of both, and the natural termination of intellect set free from the restraints of principle. The previous convulsion had prepared the field for his dominion, and left him no other means of maintaining it but that which he adopted. The destruction of property had terminated the sway of aristocracy ; the ruin of religion subverted the authority of conscience ; the vices of democracy rendered intolerable the government of numbers. The character which he figured for himself, and the mission on which he often declared he was sent—that of closing the gulf of the

15.
His despotism naturally flowed from the Revolution.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

Revolution—were in fact nothing but an indication of the direction of its principles to their inevitable end : the subjection of mankind to private selfishness and public slavery. And although in the later years of his life, after the European alliance, founded upon religion, and directed by aristocracy, had accomplished his overthrow, he again reverted to the language of democracy, and sought refuge in the arms of liberalism from the indignation of experience ; yet this was a forced and unnatural union, suggested by interest, brought about by misfortune, and which could not, in any event, have subsisted longer than the mutual necessities which gave it birth.

16.
His often
contracted
policy.

But although we may discover in the vices by which Napoleon was surrounded, and on the impulse of which he was elevated to greatness, as well as in the necessities of his situation when placed there, some apology for the principles of his government, none can be found for the narrow views on which his policy was often based, and the littleness by which his private life was sometimes disfigured. In the prosecution of his favourite design of universal dominion, he neither displayed the enlargement of a great nor the views of a benevolent mind. When he had the power to remodel the European commonwealth almost at pleasure, and distribute its different governments according to the physical necessities or durable interests of their inhabitants, he appears to have been in general directed by no other principles but temporary convenience, national vanity, or family aggrandisement. Conceding to him the merit of unconquerable perseverance in the war against England, whose overthrow was indispensable to the completion of his designs ; and admitting that he evinced extraordinary ability in the military and naval enterprises which he set on foot for her subjugation ; there is nothing in his foreign policy on continental Europe which evinced enlarged capacity, or bespoke aptitude for universal dominion. The fatal preponderance of self marred every-

thing which he attempted out of the pale of France itself.

He conceived and executed the noble design of leveling the inhospitable ridges of the Alps ; yet instead of forming, as he might have done, the whole Italian peninsula into the vast monarchy which nature has so clearly intended, and antiquity had so well prefigured, he cut it in the most arbitrary manner into shreds and patches, to form appanages for his family, or gratify the Parisians by the subjection of Rome to their government. He insisted on having, as Chateaubriand has observed, “ a department of the Tiber ;” and to effect this object, irrevocably prevented the union and ruined the independence of the peninsula. He thereby lost the great moral support which he might have derived from the revived national spirit of the Italian people. He boasted, with justice, that he had realised the dream of Louis XIV., and that under his sway there were no longer any Pyrenees : yet he subsequently marred, by selfish aggrandisement, that great enterprise ; converted an obsequious ally into a mortal enemy ; substituted popular hatred for courtly subservience ; and re-erected the Pyrenees, bristling with hostile bayonets, and reeking with the blood of slaughtered nations. He repeatedly had the destiny of the German empire in his hands, and by the lustre of his victories had not only obliterated the feeling of Gothic nationality, but converted the Confederation of the Rhine into the firmest outwork of his empire ; yet he voluntarily threw away that splendid acquisition ; cut up the Fatherland into kingdoms for his brothers, or strange offshoots of the great empire ; irritated Prussia beyond forgiveness, at once by insult and injury ; alienated the affections, without weakening the strength of Austria : and purchased the applause of France by the merciless severity of requisitions which drained away the resources and exasperated the hearts of Germany. He more than once touched on the still vibrating chord of Polish nationality,

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

17.

And repeated injuries from it to his own fortunes.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

and by a word might have added two hundred thousand Sarmatian lances to his standards ; but he did not venture on the bold step of re-establishing the throne of Sobieski ; and by the half-measure of the grand-duchy of Warsaw, permanently excited the jealousy of Russia, without winning the support of Poland.

18.
Strange
manner in
which he
marred his
own designs.

No one felt more strongly, or has more clearly expressed, the necessity of providing, by a firm European alliance, against the encroachments of the Muscovite empire, or made greater efforts to resist it ; but he himself gave that power its strongest development ; for, by unheard-of treachery on his own part, he converted the hereditary religious hatred of the Ottomans into its ally ; while by intolerable arrogance he not only stilled the long-established jealousy of Sweden, but threw his own lieutenant, its ruler, into the arms of that power. He was desirous of planting his family on all the adjoining thrones, and boasted that his dynasty would soon be the oldest in Europe ;¹ and yet he rendered his government unbearable even to his own brothers ; made the eldest resign his crown of thorns in Spain ; drove the second to seek refuge in Great Britain, to avoid his persecution ; compelled a third, by his arrogance, to abdicate the throne of Holland ; and precipitated a fourth into sensuality at Cassel to forget his indignities. No one was more sensible of the sway of religion over the human mind, or more desirous of securing its co-operation as an instrument of government ; yet he voluntarily threw away, in later years, the immense advantages which his earlier and wiser policy had given him in that respect ; converted the Pope from a warm ally into a mortal enemy, for the gratification of calling Rome the second city of his empire ; and exhibited the scandal to all Christendom of the head of the Roman Church, bereft of his dominions and detained in captivity, praying for the triumph of heretical arms for his deliverance. The grand object of his life was the destruction of the influence and overthrow of the

¹ De Stael,
Dix Ann.
d'Exil, 123.

maritime power of England ; and yet no one ever contributed so much to its extension : for, by the rigours of the Continental System, he made all the people of Europe sigh for the return of unrestrained enjoyment from her commerce ; while, by the vexations of his domination, he arrayed all its forces in dense and burning battalions under her sway. He was inexorable in the severity with which he punished the slightest infractions by others of his severe decrees for upholding the Continental System, but he himself opened up for his own benefit, by the sale of licenses, a thousand channels for the very commerce which he proscribed. The children of this world may be wiser in their generation than the children of light, but it is for *that generation* only.

These flagrant errors may be traced, in a great degree, to the insensibility to moral reaction and Supreme superintendence, which formed such a striking feature in the character of Napoleon. But there are other peculiarities which will not admit of the same explanation, and which demonstrate that he had the full share of the littleness as well as the greatness of mortality. With unconquerable perseverance and merciless rigour, he enforced the Continental System, during the greater part of his reign, in all the countries subject to his authority ; yet he himself was the first to set the example of evading his own decrees, for the sake of temporary profit to himself ; and while he was shooting, in the maritime departments, wretched shopkeepers who smuggled a pound of sugar, and heading a crusade of western Europe against Russia to enforce the observance of that system, he himself was daily amassing treasure in the vaults of the Tuileries, by selling licenses to deal in contraband goods, to an extent which defeated the whole object of his policy in that vital particular. He was well aware of the support which the fidelity of his marshals and chief dignitaries afforded to his empire, and his extraordinary knowledge of the human heart gave him unbounded sway

CHAP.
LXXVIII.
1813.

19.
His personal
littlenesses.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

over the affections of his soldiers ; yet he alienated the attachment of all in authority but a few devoted personal followers, by the occasional rudeness of his manner, and the repeated fits of ill-humour with which he received any ill success, or the slightest deviation from his commands. Great as he was, he evinced an unpardonable littleness in the envy which he felt at celebrity in others, and the tenacity with which he clung to the externals of power in himself. He outshone the military glories of Sylla ; but he could not, like him, have laid down his power, and returned to the walks of private life : his exploits were greater than those of Cæsar ; but he would never have refused the proffered crown even when he enjoyed its power. When seated on the throne of Charlemagne, he was afraid of the talents of Madame de Stael, and envious of the beauty of Madame Recamier ; and the Emperor who had borne a fall from the greatest throne in Europe, and was engaged, at the time, with the most elevated subjects of thought, often found his serenity overturned at St Helena, by the English sentinels addressing him, in obedience to their orders, by the title of General.

20.

Great mili-
tary errors
which he
committed.

If the military capacity of the Emperor on most occasions was without an equal in modern times, his recklessness and obstinacy at others were not less remarkable ; and accordingly, if history can hardly find a parallel to the achievements which he effected, it can produce none to the disasters in which they terminated. He repeatedly committed faults as a general, for the least considerable of which he would have made his lieutenants lose their heads. The imprudence of delivering a pitched battle with inferior forces at Aspern, with the Danube, traversed only by two bridges, shaking under the swollen torrent, in his rear, was equalled only by that of risking his crown at Leipsic, in a situation where, while combating a greatly superior force in front, he had no line of retreat but a single chaussée, traversing an otherwise impassable morass

a mile and a half broad. And the gross violation of all military principle in both is strongly illustrated by his own observation, that the first duty of a commander is never to fight with a strait or defile in his rear.* His imprudence in lingering so long at Moscow, surrounded by a hostile population and superior cavalry, was soon, if possible, outdone by that of relinquishing, without any adequate cause, the Kalouga road: and when the Russians were actually abandoning it, throwing back his army on the wasted line of the Smolensko advance. The unheard-of calamities of that campaign itself are mainly to be ascribed to his extreme imprudence, in advancing, contrary to the advice of his most experienced generals, to Moscow from Witepsk, without either force adequate after the waste of the campaign to subdue Russia, or any sufficient preparation for retreat in the event of disaster. And the simultaneous loss of Spain was chiefly owing to the uncalled-for temerity of rushing into the Russian contest, while the wound in the Peninsula, a devouring ulcer, was still unhealed in his rear.

When hard pressed by the troops of coalesced Europe in Germany, and unable to array an adequate force to combat them, he sacrificed his best troops in his empire, a hundred thousand strong, in the fortresses on the Elbe and the Oder; and when reduced to fifty thousand combatants on the plains of Champagne, he lost, by his obstinate retention of the fortresses on the Rhine, a force which would have enabled him to drive the invader beyond that barrier stream. In these and many similar instances, especially in the later stages of his career, it was evident that Napoleon was either infatuated by his long-continued and extraordinary success; or, what is more probable, that his vision as a general was darkened by his necessities as an emperor, and that his favourite

CHAP.
LXXVIII.
1813.

21.
Especially
in Germany
in 1813.

* "The first requisite of a field of battle, is to have no defiles in its rear. The injudicious choice of the field of battle at Waterloo by Wellington rendered all retreat impossible."—NAPOLEON'S *Memoirs*, Book ix. 207.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

maxim, that "the first movement in retreat was the commencement of ruin," rendered him insensible to all the present military dangers of his situation.* And, perhaps, it is well for the liberty of Europe that these numerous and glaring errors were committed by the French Emperor in his warlike career. For such was the profound ability which on other occasions he exhibited in his designs, and the matchless skill with which on all he carried them into execution, that if it had been otherwise—if his prudence had been equal to his genius, or his foresight to his combination—and if revolutionary passion in France had not compelled him frequently to sacrifice the ultimate safety of the empire to the present dazzling of its inhabitants—it is doubtful whether he would not have attained universal dominion, and the independence of nations been permanently crushed, as in ancient times, under the yoke of military power.

22.
The glories
of his last
campaign
in France.

It is pleasing, where so many and such serious faults have been committed, to have some redeeming actions to record ; and they, in Napoleon's case, are of such a kind, and occurred at such a time, as almost to demonstrate that it was the pressure of political considerations, the experienced necessity of keeping in constant excitement the passions of the Revolution, which drove him so often into blameable actions. His last campaign in France exhibits, if the military operations of the General and enduring fortitude of the Emperor are both taken into consideration, a model of heroic courage and military ability. Disdaining to submit even to the forces of combined Europe ; but feebly seconded by a large portion of his subjects ; heading an array depressed by unparalleled disasters, and an empire exhausted by unexampled efforts—he sought, and all but found, in his own genius, a

* This, accordingly, was the opinion of his ablest marshals:—"Napoleon," says Marshal St-Cyr, "did wrong, knowing better than any one in the world that he was doing so ; but overruled by a fatality which he felt it impossible to resist."—ST-CYR, *Histoire Militaire*, iii. 4.

counterpoise to these accumulated difficulties. In every emergency he took counsel only from his own resolution, and often found in it the means of surmounting the utmost rigours of fortune.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.
1813.

"Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito
Qua tua te Fortuna sinit."—*Æneid* vi. 95. *

By the depth of his combinations, the vigour of his execution, the skilful use of an interior line of communication, and the incomparable rapidity which he infused into his followers, he then long held the fate of Europe balanced, even against forces four times superior, and a moral energy, roused by long previous oppression and recent victory, which it seemed impossible to resist.

It is on that memorable campaign, and the immortal one which early laid the foundation of his fortunes on the Italian plains, that his great fame as a general will ultimately rest ; for in both he was destitute of the advantage of numbers, which in the intermediate periods he in general possessed ; and found, in his individual resources, a power which in the first instance conquered, and in the last all but conquered, the most rigorous fortune. And if sound political judgment must condemn the pride which made him so obstinately refuse the conditions offered to him at Châtillon, and throw all, even in that extremity, upon the chances of war, yet it must be admitted that there was something magnanimous in his resolution to run every hazard, rather than sit down on a degraded throne ; and to those who weigh well the peculiarities of his situation, wielding a revolutionary sceptre, and supported by revolutionary passion, it will probably appear that he had, in reality, no other alternative ; and that submission would have led him, by a process slower indeed, but one less honourable and equally certain, to destruction.

23.
His conduct
in refusing
peace at
Châtillon.

* " But thou, secure of soul, unbent with woes,
The more thy fortune frowns, the more oppose."
—DRYDEN'S *Virgil*.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

24.

His marvelous
sway over the
minds of his
soldiers.

Perhaps no general, in ancient or modern times, ever possessed so unbounded a sway over the minds of his soldiers, or had created among the inferior ranks of the army such a devotion, it might almost be said an idolatry, towards his person. This was very far, indeed, from being the case among the marshals and superior officers—a great proportion of whom were in secret alienated from him by the occasional rudeness of his manner, his frequent sallies of temper, the interminable wars in which he plunged them, and the rigour with which he exacted success, as the sole condition of obtaining favour, or even justice, at headquarters. His manner in public was ungracious; his look stern and at times fearful; and the occasional smiles which lighted up his countenance only rendered the gloom more awful when it returned. He did not shine in conversation, unless it assumed a serious or argumentative turn, when his ability at once became manifest. To ladies he had nothing to remark; and at St Cloud he often said to twenty in a row, “*Il fait chaud.*” Many of the felicitous expressions ascribed to him were really made by those around him, who were careful to repudiate all share in them; and nothing is more certain, that the impression he made on his contemporaries was much less considerable than the fame he has bequeathed to posterity. As little was his influence occasioned, as was so often the case with the captains of antiquity, by the generous self-denial with which Napoleon shared the bed, and partook the fare, of the common soldiers. Occasionally, indeed, he visited the bivouacs; and during the Moscow retreat he relinquished his carriages to the wounded, and marched on foot in the midst of his staff. But these were the exceptions, not the rule; and, in general, the personal comforts of the Emperor, during a campaign, were studied with the most scrupulous attention, and attained to a degree of perfection that almost appears inconceivable. His carriage, in which he always travelled, except when in presence

of the enemy, was roomy and luxurious : a portable library of choice authors was at hand to amuse his leisure moments ; his table, served up with the utmost nicety, exhibited always the best cookery. Porcelain and gold plate of the finest description were constantly made use of ; and the same etiquette and distinctions were observed in his campaign tent, or temporary lodging, as at the palace of St Cloud.¹ It was the pains which he took to seek out and distinguish merit and talent among the private men, or inferior ranks of the army, joined to the incomparable talent which he possessed of exciting the enthusiasm of the French soldiers by warlike theatrical exhibitions, or brief heart-stirring appeals in his proclamations, which constituted the real secret of his success ; and if the use of proper words in proper places be the soul of eloquence, never did human being possess that noble art in higher perfection.

Various instances of the skilful use of this method of electrifying his troops have already been given in this history ; but it was always done so admirably, and generally with such effect, as to call for particular attention. The giving of the eagles to the regiments, of the crosses of the Legion of Honour to the most deserving, and the instant promotion of extraordinary merit on the field of battle, were the usual occasions on which these heart-stirring exhibitions took place. They were in general arranged after the following manner :—On the day fixed for the distribution of these venerated insignia, the Emperor, followed by a splendid staff, entered the square of the regiment, which was drawn up on three sides facing inwards, the fourth being occupied by his suite. On the word being given, all the officers fell out, and approached the Emperor. He was alone, on horseback, in his ordinary dark-green surtout, on the dun-coloured stallion which was his favourite charger during his campaigns. The simplicity of his attire offered a striking contrast to the dazzling brilliancy of the uniforms of his attendants.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.
1813.

¹ Odel. i.
159, 160,
194, 196.
Varnhagen
von Ense,
129, 130.

25.
Distribu-
tion of
eagles.

CHAP.
LXXXVIII.

1813.

Berthier then approached the Emperor on foot ; the drums beat, and he took the eagle, with which he advanced to his side. Napoleon then raised his left hand towards the eagle, holding the reins, according to his usual custom, with his right. He then said in a deep and impressive voice—"Soldiers of the —th regiment, I intrust to you the French eagle : it will serve as your rallying point. You swear never to abandon it until death ! You swear never to permit an affront upon the honour of France ! You swear to prefer death to dishonour ! You swear !" The last words were pronounced in a solemn tone, with inconceivable energy. The officers raised their swords, and the men repeated " We swear !" with unbounded enthusiasm. The eagle was then delivered to the colonel of the regiment. With such impressive solemnities were the eagles presented to three regiments at once on the plains of Leipsic on the 15th of October, the very day before the fortunes of France were overthrown on that memorable field.¹

¹ Odel. i.
173, 174.

26.
Distribution
of crosses
of the Le-
gion of
Honour,
and instant
promotion.

The distribution of the decorations of the legion of honour, and the promotion of distinguished soldiers, furnished other occasions of which the Emperor eagerly availed himself, to renew these enthusiastic impressions, and spread abroad the belief, which in truth was well founded, that the career of distinction was open alike to all of whatever grade, and that a private soldier might reach the marshal's baton through the portals of the bivouac. It may readily be conceived that these theatrical exhibitions were got up by no small amount of careful preparation ; that the apparent recognition by the Emperor of a veteran of Arcola or the Pyramids was in general the result of previous inquiry ; and that a minute report by the officers of the regiment was the basis on which the seeming extempore rewards or promotions of the Great Chief were in reality founded. Still they were admirably calculated to rouse the emulation and excite the ambition of the soldiers of a great military republic,

of which the Emperor was the chief; and they were, above all, founded on a perfect knowledge of the temperament, at once vehement and excitable, of the French soldier. When a regiment had performed, or was about to perform any shining action, the men were drawn up, and the aspirants from each of its battalions were led up to the Emperor in front of the line; the lieutenant-colonels presented the names and services of each on little tablets to him, and the selection was made. On these occasions, a freedom of speech was indulged to the soldiers, which savoured strongly of a military republic, and offered a wide contrast to the studied servilities in the ordinary case of imperial etiquette.

Frequently officers, and even private soldiers, whose claims had been disregarded, remonstrated in firm though respectful terms with the Emperor; and, if they had reason on their side, their efforts were not unfrequently successful. Though in the palace he affected the state of Louis XIV., in the camp he often deemed it prudent to permit the military license of the followers of Clovis. "Sire, I have deserved the cross!" was the usual commencement of the remonstrance. "How so?" replied the Emperor, smiling. The battles in which the aspirant had been present, and the services he had performed, were then recounted; and if the officers present confirmed the statement, the request was at once granted. Napoleon was far from being displeased at the military frankness with which these requests were sometimes urged, and which would not have been for an instant tolerated in a civil functionary: the vehemence with which he himself addressed his officers, seemed to provoke and justify a similar style in the reply. "F—," said he once to Sebastiani, contrasting the limited exploits of his horse with those of Latour Maubourg's cuirassiers, "act like them: you command a troop of blackguards, not soldiers." "I do not command blackguards, Sire," said Sebastiani, in a firm but respectful tone; at the same time representing

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

27.

Frankness
in which he
indulged his
soldiers on
these occasions.

CHAP.
LXXXVIII.

1813.

¹ Odel. i.
169, 171.

28.
His violent
temper, but
frequent
forgiveness,
and habits
of economy.

rapidly the reason which prevented his troops from achieving more. Macdonald supported him, and together they succeeded in reducing the Emperor to silence; but his indignation broke out in violent invectives against all Sebastiani's officers, as their regiment defiled before him, while he loaded those of Latour Maubourg with eulogiums.¹

Such was the violence of the Emperor's temper, especially in the later periods of his career, that he not unfrequently struck the generals or high functionaries who were near him.* This infirmity was well known to those who were habitually about his person—in particular, Berthier, Caulaincourt, and Duroc; and, to avoid the scandal of such scenes, they usually endeavoured to remove the bystanders, and not unfrequently took an opportunity of throwing the victim of the Emperor's wrath in his way some time after, when his humour had subsided, and he was then often forgiven. It was a common saying, accordingly, among those who knew him best, that though fearfully violent, he was not rancorous in his disposition;† and numerous instances occur in his life of his total oblivion of passing subjects of anger. But if his durable interests, or those of his empire, had been affected, either by services which eclipsed his own, or by disasters which could not be retrieved, he was altogether inexorable, and retained an Italian's jealousy or hatred to the hour of his death. His habits of precision and regularity were not confined to the field; they attended

* “Napoleon was subject to terrible fits of passion and ill-humour. When he was at a loss for a good reason to oppose to those who contradicted him, he gave vent to his indignation by a short dry answer; and if any further resistance was made, he proceeded to rude extremities. To avoid the scandal of such scenes, which my character was little fitted to bear, I cut the matter short by taking a grave and respectful leave. During the campaign at Moscow, I had a quarrel with him which lasted three days, and I had actually resigned my situation, and petitioned for a command in Spain. He sent for me, however, at the end, and said, ‘I won't send you to be killed in Spain; you know we are two lovers who can't live without each other.’”—CAULAINCOURT, i. 318, 319.

† “‘Croyez-moi, il n'est pas méchant,’ disaient à son égard ses officiers supérieurs, quoique ce penchant à une colère excessive fût connu.”—ODEL i. 171.

him also in the palace. Everything there was established with mathematical correctness. Extravagance and waste were narrowly watched, and, if detected, severely punished; and the Emperor himself, in his private expenses, gave an example of well-regulated economy which enabled him, without incurring debt, to indulge in frequent acts of munificence and generosity. The expenses of the imperial establishment, which amounted to 30,000,000 francs (£1,200,000) a-year, were always examined once a-year—and often more frequently—at a council, at which the Emperor himself presided, and where every item of it was rigidly investigated.^{1*}

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813

¹ Odel. i.
141, 171,
172. De
Pradt, Var-
sovie, 44,
Caul. i. 317,
318. Mene-
val, i. 146.

By long experience, joined to great natural quickness and precision of eye, he had acquired the power of judging, with extraordinary accuracy, both of the amount of the enemy's force opposed to him in the field, and of the probable result of movements, even the most complicated, going forward in the opposite armies. The roar of artillery, the smoke and rattle of musketry, even the falling of balls around him, were alike unable to divert his steady gaze, or disturb his accurate judgment. Never was he known to be mistaken in the estimate which he formed on the distance or approach of the fire of the enemy. Even on the farthest extremity of the horizon, if his telescope could reach the hostile columns, he observed every movement, anticipated every necessity, and, from the slightest indications, drew correct conclusions as to the designs which were in contemplation. No sooner had he ascended a height from whence a whole field of battle could be surveyed, than he looked around him for a little with his telescope, and immediately

29.
Extraordi-
nary power
of judging of
enemies in
the field.

* Among these items were :—

Music of the chapels and theatres,	900,000 francs, or £36,000
Maison Militaire, . . .	800,000 — 32,000
Toilette de l'Empéreur, . . .	20,000 — 800
Toilette de l'Impératrice, . . .	720,000 — 28,400
Grand Ecuyer (servants,) . . .	4,000,000 — 160,000

—MENEVAL, i. 146, 147.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

formed a clear conception of the position, forces, and intentions of the whole hostile array. In this way he could, with surprising accuracy, calculate in a few minutes, according to what he could see of their formation and the extent of ground which they occupied, the numerical force of armies of sixty or eighty thousand men ; and if their troops were at all scattered, he knew at once how long it would require for them to concentrate, and how many hours must elapse before they could make their attack. On one occasion, in the autumn of 1813, some of Napoleon's generals expressed an opinion that he might expect to be assailed on the side of Bohemia. "From what I can see," said he, calmly closing his telescope after observing their troops for some time, "the enemy have there two corps of sixty thousand men ; they will require more than one day to concentrate and be ready to attack ; we may pursue our march." The event proved that his prognostication was well founded.¹

¹ Odel. i.
165, 166.

30.
His habits
at the bi-
vouac fires.

When circumstances obliged the Emperor to remain for some hours, either in the morning or evening, in the open air, the first care of the chasseurs in attendance was to make ready a good fire. The flames were always alimented by an extraordinary quantity of wood ; and, for this purpose, large logs or pieces of furniture were heaped upon it. Berthier alone remained near his person, all the others keeping at a respectful distance, as they would have done from the imperial table. While waiting there, Napoleon walked about alone, with his hands behind his back, till he heard the guns or other signals of which he was in expectation. When he began to get tired he took large doses of snuff, or amused himself by pushing about the flints or pebbles under his feet, or thrusting wood into the fire. He could not remain a moment quiet without doing something ; and if news of an exciting or disquieting kind was received,² he not unfrequently poured the whole snuff out of the snuff-box into

² Odel. i.
164, 165.

the hollow of his hand, and shovelled it all at once up his nostrils.

This power of judging by his eye of the distance, numbers, and designs of the enemy, was of peculiar value to Napoleon in the campaign of 1813, in consequence of the great deficiency of light troops on his own part, as well as the extraordinary skill and dexterity of the numerous bands of them in the service of the enemy. The peasantry, too, even in Saxony, were all hostile, and communicated intelligence as readily to the Allies as they withheld it from him; so that he could obtain little information, either from his own men, or the inhabitants of the country in which the operations were conducted. His turn of mind was essentially mathematical, and he applied the ordinary rules of geometry and trigonometry, with surprising quickness and accuracy, to the march and distance of troops, by a sort of intuitive mental operation, without the aid of either diagrams or calculations. Nevertheless this mental power, though of immense service in the field, and in presence of the enemy, was not without its inconvenience; and it contributed to bring about some of the greatest disasters in which the detached corps of his army, at the later periods of the war, were involved. The Emperor, being accustomed to consider everything with geometrical precision, and to estimate human strength and capacity at its highest average, calculated upon the march of his different corps as he would have done on the result of an arithmetical calculation, and was as much surprised when the one failed him, as he would have been if the other had not produced the expected result.* Knowing, by experience,

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

31.

Evil consequences which resulted from the Emperor's decided opinion and conduct.

* "The precision with which he was accustomed to see the marches he ordered executed by his generals, led him to believe that it was easy to provide for the wants of an army. His dictatorial tone appeared to him as sufficient to procure bread and meat, as it was to assemble his corps at a given point. He was too much occupied with his mathematical or geographical calculations, to pay much attention to the tedious operation of providing for his troops. He detested that part of the service, as continually thwarting his projects. Daru, from the fear of irritating him, did not, on such matters, frequently

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

¹ Odel. i.
129, 130.

^{32.}
The bad
effects of
his impe-
tuous tem-
per and
habits.

that men could march, when well fed and in good spirits, ten leagues a-day, and often combat after it, he too often reckoned on their being always able to do so, and took not the smallest account of the exhaustion arising from bodily fatigue, want of shoes, mental depression, or scanty rations.¹

Indefatigable himself in the pains which he took to provide subsistence for his troops, and accurately calculating the period when the supplies ordered should arrive at their several points of destination, he invariably acted on the supposition that they had done so ; and was deaf to all representations that the troops were starving, because he had given directions sufficient, if executed, to have prevented such a calamity. He never took into consideration the many cases in which the commissariat were physically unable to execute his orders, especially for the feeding of the enormous multitudes which were latterly assembled under his banners,* or the still more numerous ones in which their faithful performance was eluded by the negligence or cupidity of inferior functionaries. Thus he was constantly exacting from his officers and soldiers services which they were altogether unable to perform ; and gave vent to the most violent sallies of ill-humour against his generals, when in consequence battles were lost, or corps failed to reach the prescribed point at the appointed time, which alienated them not a little

venture to represent the greatness of the danger. Napoleon thought he had sufficiently provided for that department, by ordering that a great quantity of provisions should be sent from France. Every one knew how these supplies were intercepted, by the negligence or cupidity of inferior agents ; but no one had the courage to tell him so ; or possibly they allowed the evil to go on, that necessity might at length divert him from his system of continual warfare. For long the private soldier had become a merchandise of no value.”—ODELEBEN, i. 13.

* “I had received orders,” says General Mathieu Dumas, “to assemble the municipality of Dresden, and to exact from them large supplies of provisions ; but the passage, and above all the disorders following the retreat of the Allied army, had so completely exhausted that unfortunate city, that my requisitions, my efforts, and my menaces, were alike incapable of making them good, save with the utmost difficulty. Despite its natural fertility, that country was exhausted ; and yet it was necessary to put the army immediately in a condi-

from his person. Yet such was the terror produced by the vehemence of his temper, and the experienced benefit, to the personal interests of those around him, of falling in with his opinions, especially in his later years, that few had the moral courage necessary to withstand the ebullition consequent on the disclosure of unexpected and unpleasant truths, and fewer still the virtue to resist the prospects of fortune and promotion, consequent on chiming in with his opinions. His conceptions were so vivid, his temper so ardent, his mind so vehement, that he became, after his accession to the empire, almost incapable of bearing contradiction, or hearing painful truths. Like maniacs, or fanatics, whether in religion or politics, he became at last completely insensible to the evidence of facts, how clear or convincing soever, when they were not in unison with his preconceived opinions or secret wishes. Even an arithmetical demonstration that he had been wrong in the estimate he had formed of the length of a march, or the strength of a division, produced no impression; he reasoned and acted exactly as if his previous ideas had been well founded. In summing up the number of men who composed a battalion or division, he never failed to make the result greater than it really was; and the demonstration of this produced no sort of impression on his mind: he proceeded as if his previous calculations had been correct.¹ So imperious was his disposition, that he

CHAP.
LXXVIII.
1813.

¹ De Pradt, Ambassade à Varsovie, 8, 9, and 94. Dumas, Souv. iii. 502, 503. Meneval, iii. 121.

tion to pursue the enemy, and march for several days. The Emperor showed, with great injustice, much ill-humour, because I could not conquer impossibilities. He never admitted any obstacle of time, or the nature of things, as a bar to his will; he was resolute to attack the enemy and push on, and insisted for the supplies. 'I wish to make Dresden,' said he, 'with its double *tête-de-pont*, the centre and pivot of my army; but I must have resources for my troops during their marches and operations beyond the Elbe. Do you understand me?' I answered respectfully, but firmly, that I did not see how it was possible for Dresden to become such a *dépôt*. I went too far, doubtless; for the Emperor addressed to me some severe expressions, and sent for Duroc. 'You commit the same fault perpetually,' said Berthier to me when the scene was over; 'you insist upon answering the Emperor.'" Dumas was never forgiven; he was dismissed from his employment at headquarters, and left in a subordinate situation at Dresden.—See *Souvenirs de DUMAS*, iii. 503.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

seemed determined to make facts and figures themselves subservient to it.* To such a length did this arrive, that his generals ceased to report their losses to headquarters, for fear of being deprived of their commands; or the details, if transmitted, produced no impression, and he prescribed attacks to them, on the supposition that their effective men were double those actually present with the eagles.

33.
Intensity
with which
he clung to
his precon-
ceived ideas.

This vehement and untractable character of Napoleon's mind exercised a great influence, at every period, over his fortunes, long sustaining them in critical circumstances by the force of indomitable resolution, and involving him in the end, from the effects of his obstinacy, in unheard-of calamities. It was in some measure, doubtless, owing to the impatience of control, which is, in every instance, and in the most reasonable men, the consequence of the enjoyment of long-continued power; but it arose also, in a great degree, from original temper, and characterised more or less every period of his career. His genius was vast, but it was after the manner of the Orientals rather than the Europeans; he followed neither the dictates of truth nor the lessons of experience, but the vivid pictures and vehement suggestions of his own fervent imagination. Such was the intensity of these impressions, that they made him entirely forget reality; he reasoned and acted upon them, after the manner of insane persons, as if they had been actual existences.† Ideas with him instantly led to desire; his incipient thought was already a pas-

* "Dans le calcul d'hommes qui devaient composer ses bataillons, ses régiments ou divisions, *il en faisait toujours le résumé total*. On ne peut pas croire qu'il voulut se faire illusion à lui-même, mais il jugeait souvent nécessaire de donner le change sur la force de ses corps. Quelques représentations qu'on lui fit, il repoussait l'évidence, et persistait opiniâtrément dans son erreur volontaire de calcul."—MENEVAL, iii. 121. (His private secretary.)

† In nine cases out of ten, insanity is nothing but selfishness run to seed. People think about their own affairs, or supposed grievances, till they mistake their fancies for realities, and act accordingly. Any person who will walk through a lunatic asylum, and converse with the patients, will at once perceive this. Napoleon's vivid imagination and intense thought often produced a similar result.

sion ; and his chief endeavours afterwards were directed to conquering the difficulties or overcoming the obstacles which opposed its execution. Thence the complaint, so commonly made against him, especially in his later years, that he had an instinctive aversion to truth, was wholly incapable of bearing contradiction, and that no one could secure his favour except by anticipating and confirming his preconceived opinions. It was not that he had a repugnance towards truth in the abstract, but that he resisted everything which deranged or unsettled the existing current of his ideas. From the same cause, he never was known to change his opinion on any subject ; nor did he ever admit, except in one or two flagrant instances, such as the attack on Spain, that he had done wrong or committed a mistake in his life. His ideas were conceived in the vivid imagination of the East, and much more frequently founded on abstract conceptions than on practical observation ; but they were developed with the strictness of geometrical demonstration, and engraven on his mind in characters more durable than the sculptures on Egyptian granite.¹

It was very early in life that Napoleon secluded himself, as it were, from other men, and became impressed with the lofty objects to which he appeared to be destined. He himself has told us, that it was after the storming of the bridge of Lodi in 1796, that he first conceived he was to do great things ;² and we have the authority of Duroc for the assertion, that even at that early period he kept his generals as much at a distance as he afterwards did in the court of the Tuileries. He was then reserved and austere—dreamy and contemplative ; and it was evident some great designs had got possession of his mind. Shortly after his entry into Milan, in the same year, some one hinted to him, that with his vast reputation it would be no difficult matter to establish himself permanently in that duchy. “There is a finer throne than that vacant,” replied the future successor of

CHAP.
LXXVIII.
1813.

¹ De Pradt, Introd. à l'Amb. à Varsovie, 94.

34.
Early appearance of this peculiarity in his character, and of his views toward the East.
² Las Cases, i. 71. Meneval, iii. 5.

CHAP.
LXXXVIII.
1813.

Charlemagne. "There are two tottering crowns which I am about to prop up," said he in 1794, when out of employment after the siege of Toulon—"those of Constantinople and Persia." To overthrow the Turkish empire, and establish himself on the throne of Constantine, was the real object of his expedition to Acre in 1799 ; and even after he had seized the consular sceptre, he still looked to the East as the appropriate scene of his glory, and the only theatre of great achievements. "There has been nothing to be done in Europe for two hundred years," said he in 1804 : "it is in the East only that great things are to be achieved." All his ideas of universal empire in the West tended to, and were designed as preparations for that one favourite object of oriental ambition. It was to prepare the way for its accomplishment that he pursued England with such persevering hostility, and incurred all the hazards of the Peninsular contest ; and his secret design in advancing to Moscow was less to plant his standards on the walls of the Kremlin, than to prepare the way for the seizure of Constantinople, and follow in the footsteps of Cyrus and Alexander.¹

¹ De Pradt, Varsovie, 17, 18, Odel. i. 11.

35.
His low opinion both of men and women.

² De Pradt, Varsovie, 17.

He had a very low opinion of human nature ; an opinion which will probably be shared with him to the end of time by all persons in authority who are witnesses of the baseness and servility with which they are surrounded. "Tacitus," said he, "wrote romances ; Gibbon is a declaimer ; Machiavel is the only author really worth reading."² It must be admitted, he put in practice many of the maxims of the Florentine sage, and doubtless saw enough around him to justify the view he took of mankind. His opinion of women was still lower : he never could be persuaded to converse with them seriously on any subject, or regard them as anything but playthings or objects of pleasure. He strongly felt, with Bacon, their value to young men as mistresses, to old as nurses ; but utterly denied their utility, even to middle life, as com-

panions.* “Love,” said Napoleon, “is the occupation of an idle man ; the amusement of a busy one ; and the shipwreck of a sovereign.”¹ He had all an Italian’s jealousy in his disposition ; and the levity of Josephine’s manner frequently excited that passion in a frightful manner. Such was the vehemence of his anger on account of one of these indiscretions on her part, soon after his return from Egypt, that a separation was only prevented by the strenuous efforts of Eugene and her other relations. It was his favourite position that the Orientals understood much better how to dispose of the female sex than Europeans ; that the harem was the true scene both of their respectability and their usefulness ; and that, if it were not for the object of having a family, no man of sense would ever marry. His well-known answer to Madame de Stael, when asked by that celebrated wit, “Whom do you consider the greatest woman that ever existed ?” “She that had the greatest number of children,” was not a mere casual repartee, but the felicitous expression of his deliberate opinion.²

His amorous propensities, nevertheless, were violent, and his infidelities frequent, both in Paris and the capitals he had conquered ; for his physical passions were very strong. But none of his fancies ever influenced his conduct, or affected his judgment in other matters, and they were generally of very short duration. There was a brusquerie and precipitation in his manner towards

CHAP.
LXXXVIII.

1813.

¹ Las Cas.
ii. 15. Me-
neval, i.
214.

² Las Cases,
v. 242.

36.

His amours.

* “The Emperor, who knew men so well, was ignorant of women. He had not lived with them, and did not understand them ; he disclaimed so futile a study. His sensations, entirely physical in regard to them, admitted no influence from liveliness, intelligence, or talent ; he had an aversion to their being learned or celebrated, or emerging from their ordinary domestic sphere. He placed them, in the social order, at the lowest point, and never could admit that they should have any influence over the will. A woman was in his eyes an agreeable piece of creation, a pretty plaything, an amusing *passe-temps*, but nothing more. Attempts have been made to give a romantic character to his ephemeral amours ; but the truth is, that he never forgot himself in these *liaisons* ; he never felt the delirium when the intoxicated heart gives more than is sought of it. ‘Love,’ said he, ‘is a foolish preoccupation, and nothing more ; be assured of that.’”—CAULAINCOURT, i. 158.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

women, both in public and private, which his greatest admirers admit to have been repugnant to every feeling of female delicacy. On some occasions he treated them, after the fancy of the moment was over, with a rudeness and indelicacy, which no man with the feelings of chivalry, or even of an ordinary gentleman, could bring himself to do.* He had hardly any conversation to address to them in the saloons of St Cloud, and still less in the privacy where his passing intrigues were carried on. He thought—and often found—that they should yield as fast as a beleaguered fortress did to the assault of his grenadiers. His letters to Josephine in early life are those of an ardent lover ; but there is little of the refinement of sentiment in them, even at that youthful period. He had one passing amour of a serious kind with a Polish lady of rank at Warsaw in 1807, in whose breast he awakened so romantic an attachment, that with the fidelity of woman to misfortune, she repaired to Elba after his fall to console his solitude. But this was a solitary instance of real attachment ; in general his ideas of women were those of the senses only. He never got the better, as hardly any one ever does, of the want of the society of elegant women early in life ; and on occasion of his marriage with Marie Louise in 1810, he accosted her rather as a grisette who had been won by three weeks' fidelity, than the daughter of the Cæsars, who had been the prize of a hundred victories.¹†

¹ De Pradt, Varsovie, 17. Capefigue, Histoire de Nap. viii. 352. Meneval, iii. 167.

* "Napoléon avait reçu dans son lit à Milan une Italienne de seize années, belle comme le jour ; au milieu de la nuit il la renvoya, de même qu'il aurait fait jeter par la fenêtre un bouquet de fleurs. Les femmes en général detestaient Napoléon comme mères : elles l'aimaient peu comme femmes, parceque elles n'en étaient pas aimées ; sans délicatesse, il les insultaient, ou ne les recherchait que pour un moment. Il a inspiré quelques passions d'imagination : la poésie de la fortune est quelquefois moins séduisante que celle du malheur—il y a des fleurs de ruines."—CHATEAUBRIAND, *Memoires*, v. 384.

† He jumped into the carriage, when she drove up to the post-town where he met her, in his great-coat wet with rain ; embraced her with the ardour of one-and-twenty ; ordered the postilions to drive at the gallop to Compiègne, where he asserted the conjugal rights before any marriage ceremony had been performed.—See BAUSSET, *Mémoires de Napoléon*, ii. 45, 46 ; and CAPEFIGUE, *Histoire de Napoléon*, viii. 352, 353. Extraordinary and incredible as this

No words can convey an adequate idea of the indefatigable activity of the Emperor, or of his marvellous power of undergoing mental and bodily fatigue. He brought to the labours of the cabinet a degree of industry, vigour, and penetration, which was altogether astonishing. Those who were most in his confidence were never weary of expressing their admiration at the acuteness, decision, and rich flow of ideas which distinguished his thoughts when engaged in business. When he received despatches, the first step was to call in the officer who brought them, and question him minutely as to all the particulars not specified in the writing. Not unfrequently his secretaries, or the officers in attendance, had to undergo similar interrogatories as to the places and distances which were the theatre of action. Having acquired the requisite information, he at once took his decision ; and it was only on very particular occasions that he adjourned the consideration of anything to the day following. No one better understood or more thoroughly practised De Witt's celebrated maxim, the justice of which is probably well known to all engaged extensively in active life, that the great secret of getting through business is to take up everything in its order, and do only one thing at a time. During a campaign, he set no bounds to the fatigue which he underwent. Often, after reading despatches, or dictating orders to one set of secretaries during the whole day, he would commence with another relay at night, and, with the

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

37.

His extraordinary
powers of
mental ex-
ertion.

anecdote may appear, it is not without a precedent in French history, and is fully confirmed by a late and most respectable authority, Baron Meneval, private secretary to the Emperor at the time, who gives exactly the same account both of his first meeting with Marie Louise, and of his summary proceedings at Compiègne before either the civil or religious ceremony of marriage had taken place at Paris.—“L'Empereur imita la conduite que tint Henri IV. envers Marie de Médicis, dans une pareille circonstance. Un appartement avait été préparé pour l'Empereur à l'hôtel de la Chancellerie, mais son impatience ne lui permit pas de se soumettre à cette partie du cérémoniel ; il ne quitta point le palais, laissant le champ libre aux conjectures. La première introduction de la nouvelle Impératrice se fit le lendemain dans le cabinet de l'Empereur.”
—BARON MENEVAL, *Souvenirs Historiques de Napoléon*, i. 254, 256.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

¹ Meneval,
i. 134, 135;
iii. 118, 119,
120. Las
Cases, vi.
213. Odel.
i. 4, 181,
182.

38.
His habits
during a
campaign.

² Las Cases,
i. 357.

June 10,
1813.

exception of a few hours' sleep on his sofa, keep them hard at work till the following morning. He always walked about when he was dictating; the energy of his mind, and rapid succession of his ideas, rendered it impossible for him to sit still. The fervour of his imagination, the vehemence of his conceptions, seemed to render him insensible to the fatigues of the moment, which were felt as altogether overwhelming by his attendants, less wrapt up than himself in the intense anticipation of the future. He scarcely ever wrote with his own hand, and it was with the utmost difficulty, and only by the aid of a sort of short-hand, that his secretaries were able to keep pace with the rapidity of his composition. His ideas flowed without intermission, and he never experienced the least difficulty in finding expressions. But his writing was so bad as to be almost illegible even to himself: a few letters were only given to each word; and such as were employed were in general wrong spelt.¹

If, in the course of a campaign, he met a courier on the road, he generally stopped, got out of his carriage, and called Berthier or Caulaincourt, who sat down on the ground to write what the Emperor dictated. Frequently then, the officers around him were sent in different directions, so that hardly any remained in attendance on his person.² When he expected some intelligence from his generals, and it was supposed that a battle was in contemplation, he was generally in the most anxious state of disquietude; and not unfrequently in the middle of the night called out aloud, "Call d'Albe, (his principal secretary;) let every one arise." He then began to work at one or two in the morning; having gone to bed the night before, according to his invariable custom, at nine o'clock, as soon as he had dined. Three or four hours' sleep was all that he either allowed himself, or required. During the campaign of 1813, there was only one night—that when he rested at Görlitz, after the conclusion of the armistice—that he slept ten hours without

wakening. Often Caulaincourt or Duroc were up with him hard at work all night. On such occasions, his favourite Mameluke, Rustan, brought him frequently strong coffee; and he walked about from dark till sunrise, speaking and dictating without intermission, in his apartment, which was always well lighted, wrapped up in his night-gown, with a silk handkerchief tied like a turban round his head. But these stretches were only made under the pressure of necessity: generally he retired to rest at eight or nine, and slept till two, then rose and dictated for a couple of hours; then rested, or more frequently meditated for two hours alone; after which he dressed, and a warm bath prepared him for the labours of the succeeding day.¹

CHAP.
LXXVIII.
1813.

¹ Odel. i.
183, 185.
Bausset,
ii. 213.

When on a journey, whether during a campaign or in time of peace, he always rose early, and never stopt in a village or at an inn to breakfast. He had soup with him in the carriage; and, when he felt hungry, alighted, sat down on the road-side, or at the foot of a tree, and shared his simple repast with his immediate attendants. His travelling carriage was a perfect curiosity, and singularly characteristic of the prevailing temper of his disposition. It was divided into two unequal compartments, separated by a small low partition on which the elbows could rest, while it prevented either from encroaching on the other: the smaller was for Berthier, the larger, the lion's share, for himself. The Emperor could recline in a *dormeuse* in front of his seat; but no such accommodation was afforded to his companion. In the interior of the carriage were a number of drawers, of which Napoleon had the key, in which were placed despatches not yet read; and a small library of books. A large lamp behind gave a bright light in the interior, so that he could read without intermission all night. He paid great attention to his portable library, and had prepared a list of small editions of above five hundred volumes, which he intended to be his constant travelling

39.
His travel-
ing carriage,
and habits
on the road.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

companions ; but the disasters of the latter years of his reign prevented this design from being carried into complete execution. He sometimes rode on horseback during a march in the middle of his troops ; but this was only for a short period, or when very near considerable masses of the enemy. More frequently, as he was a most rigid economist of his time, he calculated where headquarters should arrive at the destined place of rest for the night, and remained where he had passed the preceding till the time arrived, when by driving rapidly in his carriage he could reach it. During the journey he was incessantly engaged reading despatches, or reports from his generals, to which he often gave a verbal answer to the officer who brought them as the carriage moved along. The lamp behind was constantly lighted ; so that, when it grew dark, the bright light it shed in the inside of the vehicle enabled him to continue his labours without interruption.¹

¹ Personal observation. Odel. i. 184, 185. Meneval, i. 379. 380; iii. 293.

40.
His habits on horseback.

Napoleon was extremely fond of exercise on horseback, and was both a daring and indefatigable rider ; but he was far from being a good horseman. He generally rode entire horses ; and as he frequently had them little under command, those near him were sometimes thrown from their saddles by the effects of his awkwardness. Eight or ten steeds for his private use accompanied the carriage ; but the favourite was a beautiful Arab bay, with a black tail and main. When he mounted on horseback to survey a country, two officers of his suite preceded him, and his own charger followed at a quick trot those which went before it. He usually held the reins in his *right* hand, and incessantly agitated the bit in the horse's mouth — peculiarities contrary to all the rules of the *manège*, but not a little characteristic of the incessant fervour of his mind. His restlessness of disposition was such that he could not sit still, even when carried at the gallop on horseback. The officers who rode before had come by long habit to know so well what he wanted, that he had rarely to direct their course, but his own horse followed

mechanically the direction which they took. He was passionately fond of riding across the country, through fields or woods, and over heaths ; and in a difficult path where riding was hazardous, and the whole party were obliged to dismount and lead their horses, the Emperor was always in spirits. If he came to any place where a disaster had been incurred, or which was associated with painful recollections, he pushed on at the gallop, and fell into a perfect fury if anything then checked his progress. On one occasion, in the autumn of 1813, he had occasion to pass a place where seventy caissons, of great importance to the army, had been blown up the day before by the Cossacks. On seeing the ground covered with the fragments, he immediately set off at the gallop to get over it as fast as possible ; and a little dog having followed his horse barking, he was seized with such a fit of anger that he drew one of his pistols, fired at the animal, and, having missed, dashed the pistol itself at it, still hastening on with breathless speed ; while Rustan, who was no stranger to such scenes, quietly fell behind and picked up the weapon thus thrown away by his infuriated master.¹

CHAP.
LXXVIII.
1813.

¹ Odel. i.
186, 189.

The unceasing restlessness and indefatigable activity of his disposition were strongly evinced in the irregular hours during which different things were done, and the rigorous manner in which, nevertheless, instant obedience was enforced to his commands. Often the march of headquarters was delayed for some hours, or half a day, beyond the time fixed, while the Emperor was dictating or reading despatches ; and at the last word he would call out—“ The carriage — to horse ! ” These words acted like an electric shock on his attendants, who straightway mounted, the carriage was instantly at the door, and the whole set off at the gallop. Caulaincourt generally rode on the right of the carriage, General Guyot on the left ; and the officers on service, pages, attendants, and grooms, with the led horses, rattled on as hard as they could, followed

41.
His impetuous habits in travelling, and during a campaign.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

by a squadron of the Guards. The whole pushed on at a quick trot, or the gallop, often for a day or a night without halting; and where the road was narrow, or a defile or copse was to be traversed, the vehemence with which they rode drove them against each other at the imminent hazard of their legs and necks. If the Emperor halted to make an observation, he immediately mounted one of the led horses; and four chasseurs, with fixed bayonets on their carbines, formed a square round him, which advanced always keeping him in its centre. If a distant object was to be examined, a page brought up the telescope, a very fine one being always at hand; the maps were frequently called for, and spread out on the ground, and the Emperor, lying down beside them, was soon as completely absorbed in his plans as if he had been in his cabinet at St Cloud.¹

¹ Odel. i.
163, 164.

42.
Custom in
passing
through the
troops.

When the Emperor passed through a division of the Guards, all the bands of the regiments came to the front; the troops fell back, and formed line on either side, and great pomp was observed; the cortege passing through slowly, and saluting the officers. But no such ceremony was observed in traversing the ordinary corps of the army; and the passage through them was often forced at the gallop, under circumstances almost amounting to violence. The imperial suite, like a whirlwind, swept through the columns, too fast for the men either to fall into the ranks or to present arms; and before the astonished crowd could find time to gaze on their beloved chief, the cortege was disappearing in the distance. Room, however, was always cleared; the outriders loudly called out to make way; and at the magic words—"The Emperor!" infantry, cavalry, and artillery, were pell-mell hurried to the side, often in frightful confusion, and with fractures of legs and arms. Loud huzzas never failed, to the very last, to greet his passage through the divisions of the Guards, by whom he was enthusiastically beloved, and whose wants were sedulously attended to. But though

the young conscripts, in the beginning of the campaign of 1813, were prodigal of the same acclamations, yet hardship, disaster, and suffering sensibly cooled their ardour, and before its close the imperial suite often traversed long columns of the army without a single cheer announcing its presence.¹

CHAP.
LXXXVIII.
1813.

¹ Odel. i.
174, 175.

When despatches overtook the Emperor, as they often did, on the road, Duroc or Caulaincourt, who rode at the side of the carriage, received and opened the bag, and presented the letters to the Emperor without stopping. Directly a number of envelopes were seen falling from the windows of the imperial carriage; and it was evident, from the rate at which they were tossed over, that the letters were devoured with the rapidity of lightning. The useless despatches and covers were cut to pieces, and thrown out in the same way; often in such quantities, as to strew the track of the wheels with little fragments, which, trodden under foot by the horses, or crushed under the wheels of the succeeding carriages, made a white line along the road. Napoleon generally cut these despatches to pieces with his own hands, or, if not so employed, worked incessantly with the window-sash or carriage-door. He could not remain a moment at rest. If there were no despatches or morning states to read, he had recourse to the Paris journals, or the last publications of the day, with which the drawers of the carriage were always stored; but they generally shared the fate of the unimportant despatches, being thrown out of the windows after a few pages had been cut up. In such numbers were these discarded literary novelties thus tossed overboard, that the officers of the suite generally contrived to collect no inconsiderable store of diverting trifles, by picking them up on the traces of his carriage. The Emperor was insatiable for something new, and opened with avidity every fresh publication; but his taste was for solid and well-informed writings, not amusing trifles;² and he had an incredible tact in discovering, from a few pages,

43.
Receipt of
despatches
on the road.

² Bausset,
ii. 214, Odel.
i. 145, 146.
Meneval, i.
378, 379.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

44.
Ante-
chambers
of Napoleon
during a
campaign.

whether there was anything worth reading in a book. Thus, in his hands, the ephemeral literature of the day disappeared almost as fast as it was introduced.

The antechambers of Napoleon during a campaign—whether in his tent, in the field, or in the apartments of farm-houses, or even in cottages, which were dignified for the time with the appellation of “the palace”—presented the most extraordinary spectacle. No one could form an idea of the fatigue there undergone by the whole attendants, from the grand esquire Caulaincourt to the lowest of the valets. Duroc and he were themselves indefatigable, and, by unwearied exertion and extraordinary activity, had introduced the utmost degree of regularity into the imperial household; but it was no easy matter for the strength of any others in attendance to stand the rigorous services which were exacted. Persons of illustrious birth or the highest rank—such as Count Narbonne or Caulaincourt—were obliged to wait there night after night, sleeping on straw or stretched out on chairs, ready at any moment to be called in by the Emperor. Now and then the scene was enlivened by a young and handsome actress in the last Parisian costume, who, amidst the din of war and the smoke of the bivouacs, waited to be called in to divert the Emperor for a few minutes amidst his more serious cares.¹ Frequently he roused his attendants eight or ten times in the night, when despatches requiring instant attention were received. All who were there on service slept habitually on straw, wrapt up in their cloaks, ready, at a moment’s warning, either to mount on horseback and ride twenty or thirty miles without halting, or to take their turn, the moment the Emperor’s voice was heard, in the not less fatiguing duty of answering his despatches, or writing to his dictation. So crowded was his antechamber in general with attendants, that it was not inaptly compared, by those inhabiting it, to the inside of the wooden horse of Troy.² The faithful Rustan, whom he had brought from Egypt, usually slept near the door:

¹ Odel. i.
146.

² Odel. i.
134, 135.
Bausset, ii.
167.

he dressed and undressed the Emperor ; and, when he rode out, was constantly at hand to bring the telescope, or provide the cloaks or umbrellas which might be required for protection from the weather.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.
1813.

The true scene of Napoleon's glory, and the most characteristic of the ruling passion of his mind, was his cabinet. He regarded this department of the public business as of so much importance, that a special decree was passed on 3d February 1806 for its organisation. Meneval was the secretary, and it was his duty to write to his dictation ; to present all the papers for his signature, to send off all the couriers and despatches, and to keep the keys of all the portfolios. M. Deschamp was the person appointed to bring in the petitions, and collect all the materials for the bulletins and history. M. Fain was the "Archiviste" of the cabinet : it was his duty to receive all the papers of importance from the secretary, to arrange them, and deposit them at the end of the year in the imperial archives of the secretaries of state. This apartment was never wanting even in the worst accommodation ; the ingenuity of his attendants supplied every defect ; and if no room could be got, his tent was always at hand, which was arranged for the purpose in the middle of the squares of the Old Guard. Although this important apartment was overloaded with maps, military states, and despatches, the most remarkable and uniform regularity was observed in its arrangement ; and it was so managed that, though the Emperor so often moved his headquarters, everything was in the same place one day as another. In the middle stood a large table, on which was extended the best map of the theatre of war ;* and on it were stuck pins, with heads of different colours, to represent his own and the hostile columns. It was the duty of the director of the topographic bureau, to have

45.
His habits
and labours
in the cabi-
net.

* For the campaign in Saxony in 1813, he made use of the admirable map of Petri, of which he had felt the value in the campaign of 1806 ; and occasionally of that of Blackenberg.—ODELEBEN, i. 137.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

¹ Odel. i.
135, 137.
Meneval, i.
379, 380;
ii. 153.

the map with these pins laid down the moment that headquarters arrived at any place ; and almost always the first thing which Napoleon did, when he arrived, was to call for it ; for he held to it more strongly than any other want of his existence. During the whole night the map was surrounded by twenty or thirty wax candles, constantly burning, and a fine compass stood in the middle of them. So frequently did the Emperor call for the map when out on horseback, that Caulaincourt had a portable one, which he kept constantly tied to his button across his breast ; and he often was required to unfold it ten or fifteen times in the course of a forenoon.¹

46.
His habits
of writing
and dictat-
ing.

At the corners of the cabinet were four lesser tables, at which the secretaries of Napoleon were engaged in writing ; and sometimes Napoleon himself and the chief of the topographic department were to be seen there likewise. The Emperor usually dictated walking about in his green surtout and great boots, with his hat upon his head, precisely as he was interred in the grave at St Helena. As his ideas flowed with extraordinary rapidity, and he spoke as rapidly as he thought, it was no easy matter for his secretaries to keep pace with his elocution. To facilitate the expression, a certain number of hieroglyphic symbols were established by him to signify certain things ; and they were not a little curious, as affording an index to the light in which these things were regarded by him. Thus, the tail of a dragon signified the French army ; a whip, the corps of Davoust ; *a thorn, the British empire ; a sponge, the commercial towns*. It was the duty of the secretaries afterwards to decipher this chaos, and extend it in proper sentences, which was often a work of no small difficulty ; but the Emperor had a singular facility in making it out, as the symbols had been established by himself. Often there were two despatches to which answers were to be dictated at the same time—one from Spain, and another from a distant quarter of Germany ; but the complication and variety of objects to be

considered made no confusion, on such occasions, in the steadiness of his mental gaze. The moment that a despatch was read, and its bearer questioned, an answer to it was commenced; and not unfrequently, while the secretary in one corner was making out orders of the most important kind for the war in Spain, the one that sat in another was drawing a diplomatic note; a third busy with the orders for twenty brigades; and the fourth with an A B C for the King of Rome.* Nothing could exceed the distinctness with which the threads of all these varied subjects were preserved in his mind: and although the orders which he gave for the direction of distant operations were often unfortunate or erroneous, from the impetuosity of his mind leading him to decide without sufficient information, and their effect was still more frequently marred by the neglect or incapacity of inferior functionaries; yet they were always founded on an able and lucid conception on his part. And the very errors they contained, which sometimes were of the most serious kind, generally arose from the intensity of that conception rendering him blind to the opposite set of considerations.¹

One of the most important officers in the military household of Napoleon was the keeper of the portfolio—a functionary who supplied the place of the whole tribe of registrars, keepers of archives, and state-paper officers,

CHAP.
LXXXVIII.
1813.

¹ Odel. i.
139, 141.
Meneval,
i. 235.

47.
The military
portfolio and
its keeper.

* It is frequently said, from several secretaries being engaged in the room at once, that Napoleon could dictate to three clerks at a time. This, however, is a mistake, as all those who have really been so hard pressed as to require to attempt it will readily believe. It is quite possible to dictate a serious paper to one secretary, and write a letter with your own hand, or dictate short notes, requiring little attention, at the same time: the eye giving the sense of what is written; while the memory retains the import of what has been dictated: but it is altogether impossible to dictate at the same time two serious papers on different subjects, much less three. Nevertheless, a man with an active mind may frequently be seen in a room with three secretaries, and keeping them all constantly employed; but in such a case the real mental strain is with one only; the others are making out letters from hints furnished, or writing routine despatches of little moment, or copying what is put into their hands, with possibly the addition of a sentence at the beginning and end.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

in ordinary governments; and who, though a simple Swiss porter, in the rank of a superior domestic, was intrusted with the keeping of papers of inestimable value. His duty was of the simplest, but also, for a long continuance, of the most exhausting kind. It was to be constantly at his post, and thoroughly acquainted with the place, arrangement, and look of all the documents under his charge: night and day he required to be at the door of the cabinet; no excuse but severe illness could be taken for even a minute's absence. The Emperor had, with great pains, collected a magnificent set of maps, the finest probably in existence, which was his constant companion in the campaigns of Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland, and Aspern; but it was lost during the Moscow retreat, and its place was never afterwards adequately supplied. The collection, however, though of a secondary character, which was made for the campaign of 1813, was very considerable, and two officers of approved talent and fidelity were constantly in charge of it, and at hand. So peremptory were the orders of the Emperor that they should be constantly near his person with their portfolios, that they were never more than a few yards distant either from his cabinet, his carriage, or his charger; and, being well aware of the importance of their functions, and the numerous occasions on which they were required to produce their treasures, they rode over, without ceremony, everything that came in their way. With such minute attention to details were the operations of this wonderful man conducted, and so vast the variety of information which required to be taken into account in the formation of designs which, to a superficial observer, appeared to emanate from the conceptions of original genius.¹

¹ Odel. i.
142, 144.

48.
Napoleon's
uniform and
robust
health.

Napoleon enjoyed through life the most robust health, the result in a great degree of remarkable placidity of mind. Neither his extraordinary elevation, nor his still more extraordinary fall, had any effect in permanently disturbing his equanimity of temper; and the ceaseless

activity of his mind, and the gigantic projects in which he was engaged, never affected the uniform health of his body. His perpetual change of habits, from his earliest years, and constant mental occupation, seemed to relieve him, as it has done many others, from all bodily ailments. Temperate, active, and regular, the vigour of his frame withstood all the trials to which it was subjected, and proved equal alike to the heat of Egypt and the cold of Russia ; to the fatigue of the campaign of Echemuhl, and the anxieties of a fall from the throne of Charlemagne. In person he was, like Alexander and Frederick, below the average height ; and his figure, as he advanced in life, became inclined to corpulence. His neck was short, his chest broad, his legs well turned ; his hands and feet, of which he was very vain, small, and beautifully formed. His countenance, regular and expressive in the highest degree, seemed to realise the visions of ancient sculpture, and is faithfully represented on the canvass of David, as well as the numerous coins and medals which were struck off during his reign. Early in life, he suffered much under a cutaneous disorder, contracted when serving a cannon at the siege of Toulon, and which only yielded, in 1801, to the scientific skill of Dr Corvisart. The only serious complaint with which he was ever affected, previous to the appearance of the hereditary malady which ultimately proved fatal, was occasional severe vomiting, which at the time was sometimes so violent as to produce a sort of stupor, though without any other affection in the head but what arose from sympathy with the stomach, and ultimately was beneficial, from carrying off the excessive bilious secretions. It was after going through his most fatiguing campaigns that it generally appeared ; and it was under that affection that he laboured on the fields of Aspern and Borodino. A desire to understand the nature of the human frame made him at one time take lessons from Dr Corvisart in anatomy ; but the sight of the preparations in wax of the internal parts

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

¹ Meneval,
i. 384, 385;
iii. 1, 5.

produced such a nausea, that he was seized with a violent fit of vomiting, and relinquished the subject. He could look unmoved, however, upon the most ghastly wounds, and stanced them on the field of battle with his handkerchief without evincing any similar sensations. He frequently said that he would die of cancer in the stomach before he was fifty, the age at which that complaint proved fatal to his father; but he never felt any uneasiness in that quarter till he had been some time in St Helena, where it was doubtless aggravated by the climate and mental causes.¹

49.

His command of himself in regard to sleep.

Napoleon, like Wellington and all great generals, had an extraordinary power of commanding sleep when it suited him to take rest, and doing without it when circumstances required such a privation. Six hours' rest was always enough for him in the twenty-four, as it is for all persons when undergoing great mental or bodily fatigue. It is indolent habits which require prolonged slumbers; vigour either of body or mind produces the profound sleep which speedily and completely refreshes. He awoke at once, and began to work without delay. Instantly getting up, he put on a white nightgown and silk handkerchief about his head, and, with his hands crossed behind his back, began walking up and down the room. He was soon immersed in his subject, and often so preoccupied that he did not perceive when his secretary, who had been sent for, had entered, but continued pacing up and down, repeatedly inhaling the odour of his snuff-box. When he began to dictate, he never failed to pour out his ideas with extraordinary clearness and rapidity: they seemed to spring, as his attendants said, "like Minerva ready armed from the brain of Jupiter." Often, in the course of his labour, he called for ices or sherbet, and always asked his secretary which he preferred before helping himself. He then in general went to bed again, and in five minutes was sound asleep. When he rose in this way and worked in the night, he desired not to be

called till after seven in the morning. These were his habits as well at St Cloud as during his campaigns; for he was frequently sleepless for some hours, and when this was the case, he always rose and worked till he fairly forced sleep to come to his relief. He could not bear to lie awake for any length of time unoccupied; and his attendants and secretaries were always in the antechamber, ready to be called in when he felt an inclination to rise. He seldom took rest, properly so called—that is, absolute cessation from exertion. Repose by him was found in the change of occupation—a secret well known to all who have been much engaged in active life or literary labour. Like Voltaire, he had several writing-tables in his cabinet, each containing the papers relating to a different subject; and when exhausted by working at the one, he found recreation in taking to another.¹

CHAP.
LXXXVIII.

1813.

¹ Meneval,
i. 134, 135;
iii. 122.
Gourgaud,
Examin. de
l'ouvrage de
Ségur, 94.

Although no man in modern times has occasioned such a destruction of the human species, Napoleon was often susceptible of pity for individual suffering; and as he rode, according to his constant custom, over the fields of his victories after the carnage had ceased, he frequently made some of his suite stop to stanch the wounds or alleviate the sufferings of the maimed, of whatever nation. On one occasion in Silesia, when riding in this manner over a field strewed with the wounded and the slain, he made his own surgeon dismount to bind up the wounds of a Russian who still gave some signs of life. “If he is saved,” said he, “there will be one the less to hate me as the cause of his death.”² Not unfrequently he dis-

50.
Napoleon's
occasional
acts of
humanity
and genero-
sity.

² Odel. i. 81.

mounted himself and felt the pulse of a wounded man, or put a flask of spirits, which his Mameluke always carried with him, to his lips, to restore the spark of life. He even applied his own handkerchief to wipe away the clotted blood and dust which obstructed the breathing of those who were severely mutilated. On such occasions he was wont to halt and command silence, to hear the cries or groans of the wounded.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

He did this, in particular, more than once on the field of Wagram. At a fire in Verdun in 1805, some English sailors exerted themselves strenuously to extinguish the flames. No sooner had this come to the knowledge of Napoleon, than he ordered them to be sent home to their own country, with money to carry them from his privy purse. During the Moscow retreat, near Winkowo, he addressed to Marshal Mortier, who remained with the rearguard at Moscow, the most humane and touching injunctions as to the care of the wounded.* After the battle of Bautzen, he had occasion to pass through the town of Bischofswerda, which had fallen a prey to the flames during the preceding contest. The smouldering ruins, and starving inhabitants, striving to rescue some of their effects from the devastation, presented a most melancholy spectacle, with which the Emperor was deeply affected; and having ascertained that the fire had been occasioned by the wantonness of his own soldiers, he promised to give the sufferers indemnification, and actually fixed 100,000 francs (£4000) for that purpose; but having failed to provide the requisite funds from the military chest, the payment of this sum fell as a burden on the King of Saxony.¹ When he arrived at Bunzlau in Silesia, where his old antagonist Kutusoff had breathed his last, he inquired if any monument existed to his memory; and being informed that there was none, he ordered one to be raised at his own expense—an honourable design, which the misfortunes of the close of the campaign prevented from being carried into execution.²

¹ Odel, i. 85.
Fain, i. 401.
Meneval, i.
305; iii.
312.

² Fain, i.
441. Mene-
val, i. 385.

* "Je ne saurais trop vous recommander ce qui nous reste encore des blessés. Placez-les sur les voitures de la Jeune Garde, sur celles de la cavalerie-à-pied, en fin, sur toutes celles qu'on trouvera. Les Romains donnaient des couronnes civiques à ceux qui sauvaient des citoyens; combien n'en mériterez-vous pas à mes yeux, pour tous les malheureux qui vous sauverez. Il faut les faire monter sur vos propres chevaux, sur ceux de votre monde; c'est ainsi que j'ai fait à St Jean d'Acre. On doit commencer par les officiers, passer en suite aux sous-officiers, préférer les Français. Assemblez les généraux et les officiers sous vos ordres; faites leur sentir tout ce que l'humanité exige dans cette circonstance."—NAPOLÉON au MARESCAL MORTIER, *Winkowo*, Oct. 26, 1812. MENEVAL, iii. 312.

Heroic conduct, whether in his own troops or those of his enemies, seldom failed to arrest his attention. On one occasion, at Boulogne, he received intelligence of a young English sailor who had escaped from his place of confinement in the interior of France, and made his way to the coast near that town, where he had secretly constructed a skiff of the branches and bark of trees, with which he was about, when seized, to brave the tempests of the Channel, in hopes of making his way to one of the English cruisers, and regaining his native country. Struck with the hardihood of the project, Napoleon ordered the young man to be brought into his presence, and himself questioned him as to his motives for undertaking so perilous an adventure; for the bark seemed incapable of bearing the weight of a human being. The sailor persisted in his having intended to embark in it, and besought the Emperor to permit him to carry his design into execution. "Doubtless," replied Napoleon, "you must have some mistress to revisit, since you were so desirous to regain your country?" "No," replied the young man, "I only wished to see my mother, who is old and infirm." "And you shall see her," rejoined the Emperor; and immediately gave orders that the young man should be equipped anew, and sent with a flag of truce on board the first cruiser with the British flag, adding a small sum for his mother, who must, he added, be no common person to have so affectionate a son. He attached the greatest importance to moral courage in his generals; and often said he would rather have an army of deer commanded by a lion, than an army of lions commanded by a deer.¹

Although the campaigns were the great scene of Napoleon's activity, yet peace was very far indeed from being a season of repose to his mind. He was then incessantly engaged in the maze of diplomatic negotiations, projects of domestic improvements, or discussions in the council of state, which filled up every leisure moment of the fore-

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

51.

His generous conduct to an English sailor.

¹ Las Cases, vii. 78, 79. Meneval, iii. 308.

52.

His habits at Paris and St Cloud.

CHAP.
LXXXVIII.

1813.

noon. He rose early, and was engaged in his cabinet with his secretary till breakfast, which never lasted above half an hour. He breakfasted alone, and during the repast was engaged in conversation with some persons who appeared as guests and stood round the room, on literature and the sciences. He then attended a parade of his troops, received audiences of ambassadors, and transacted other official business till three o'clock, when he generally repaired to the council of state, or rode out till dinner, which was always at six. He dined with Josephine, and spent the evening in discussions with literary and scientific men, in whose conversation he took great delight. If there were no women in the party, he was very fond of criticising and turning into ridicule their habits and inclinations, particularly their frivolity and love of dress, which he judged of by what he saw in the Empress. At night he generally had her to read to him for half an hour after he had lain down to rest; and as she read extremely well, he took great pleasure in that recreation after the fatigues of the day. When engaged in business, or at the council-board, his activity, as in his campaigns, was incessant: he could not rest a moment idle. At the head of the table of the council of state, he was constantly cutting the chair on which he sat with his penknife;* and on his favourite desks at St Cloud, Fontainebleau, and the Elysée Bourbon, where all his great designs were matured, the deep and innumerable indentations of his penknife are still to be seen.† If he could get nothing else to work with, he bit his own nails to the quick till the blood came.¹

¹ Caul. ii.
14. Mene-
val, iii. 10,
11.

53.
His habits
at meals and
in the even-
ing.

Dinner occupied exactly forty minutes: the Emperor conversed a great deal, unless his mind was much pre-occupied, but never indulged in the slightest convivial excess. Coffee succeeded at twenty minutes to seven,

* "I sat down in the arm-chair on which the Emperor used to rest, all lacerated and cut up with the penknife."—*Souvenirs de CAULAINCOURT*, ii. 14.

† The author has repeatedly seen them.—See also CAULAINCOURT, ii. 14.

unless some special occasion required a longer stay at table ; and the remainder of the evening, till eleven, when he retired to rest, was engaged in discussions and conversation with a circle of officers, ambassadors, scientific or literary men, artists of celebrity, or civil functionaries. In their society he took the greatest delight. On such occasions, he provoked discussion on serious and interesting topics, not unfrequently morals, political philosophy, and history ; and never failed to astonish his auditors by the extent of his information, and the original views which he started on every subject that came under discussion. A little talent or knowledge in an Emperor, doubtless goes a great way ; and suspicions might have been entertained that the accounts transmitted to us by his contemporaries of the ability of his conversation were exaggerated, did not ample and decisive evidence of it remain in the memorials of St Helena, and the luminous speeches, superior to any other at the council-board, which are recorded by Thibaudeau and Pelet in their interesting works on the Council of State during the Consulate and Empire. In general his life was one of continued labour ; but occasionally he indulged himself in a few days of total cessation from business. These periods, however, were far from being those of an entire intermission from mental exertion : he seemed on such occasions to be puzzled how to fill up his time. The day appeared to be so long that he seemed to think it would never come to an end. He talked an hour with the Empress ; sauntered through the rooms for a few minutes ; sat down on an arm-chair and slept a quarter of an hour ; and not unfrequently sat down on the knees of his secretary, put his arms round his neck, and, like a child, diverted himself by gently pulling his ear, or patting his cheek.¹*

CHAP.
LXXVIII.
1813.

¹ Opinions de Napoléon, dans le Conseil d'Etat, par Pelet, Paris, 1833 ; and Thib. sur le Consulat, Paris, 1815. Meneval, iii. 124.

* “ Dans ces jours d'un désceuvrement qui n'était qu'apparent, car si le corps était inactif, l'esprit ne l'était pas : il allait passer une heure chez l'Impératrice ; puis il revenait, s'asseyait sur sa causeuse, et s'y endormait, ou paraissait dormir, pendant quelques instants. Il venait ensuite s'asseoir sur le coin de mon

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

54.
His habits
as a husband
and a father.

In domestic life, Napoleon was exempt from the habitual influence of most of the vices which so often consume the time and destroy the usefulness of persons in his exalted station. Though not a faithful, he was a kind husband : his attachment to Josephine, the real partner of his life, was sincere ; and to Marie Louise he evinced a delicate regard and consideration which could hardly have been expected from his previous habits and advanced period of life. His transient amours, of which he had many, were conducted in strict privacy, and neither estranged him from the Empress, nor afforded any ground for public scandal. In early life, he indulged for a brief season in the dream of romantic love ; and though his marriage with Josephine was suggested by motives of ambition, her amiable qualities soon acquired a powerful hold of his heart : his letters to her during the Italian campaigns breathe the ardour of devoted attachment ; and to the end of his life, even after her divorce, she possessed a large share of his affection, and he in secret believed that her destiny was in some mysterious way interwoven with his own. Female blandishments never either absorbed his time, or clouded his judgment. He was subject to terrible fits of jealousy, for which the levities and extravagance of Josephine afforded too much foundation : but he was not unforgiving in his disposition ; and, though his moody temperament was wrought up on such occasions to the most violent pitch of wrath, yet he was not inaccessible to returning reason or forgiveness. His divorce of her was suggested by the ruling principles of his life—state policy and ambition ; and, in carrying it into execution, he did everything which tender solicitude could suggest to soften so terrible a blow. The pain which it cost him was greater than could have been expected from one who was habitually guided by views of a general

bureau, ou sur un des bras de mon fauteuil, quelquefois sur mes genoux. Il passait son bras autour de mon cou, s'amusait à me tirer doucement l'oreille, ou à me frapper sur l'épaule, ou sur la joue."—MENEVAL, iii. 124, 125.

nature ;* while its ultimate disastrous effects afforded a signal proof that durable advantage, even in this world, is not to be purchased by harsh or iniquitous measures.¹ Though the Empress Marie Louise was little more than an amiable nonentity, and she proved herself in the end altogether unworthy of being his wife, yet he was kind and considerate to her during the few years that she shared his fortunes ; and towards the King of Rome he invariably felt the warmest affection. Parental feelings, indeed, strong in almost all but the utterly selfish, were peculiarly warm in his bosom. The education and progress of his son occupied a large share of his attention, even on the most momentous occasions of his life ;† and one of the bitterest pangs which he felt during his exile at St Helena, was owing to his separation from that beloved infant, with whom his affections and prospective glories had been indissolubly wound up.²

It could not be said that Napoleon was a devout, and most certainly he was not what is usually called a religious man. He cared little for the forms of devotion ; was seldom seen at public worship ; and when he was obliged to attend mass at the Tuileries, he generally spent the time in a small apartment communicating with the chapel, reading despatches. But it would be equally far from the truth to say that he was an irreligious man. No one felt more strongly the importance of religious belief to mankind, or was more solicitous, so far as was practicable in that infidel age, to re-establish it. Nor was

CHAP.
LXXXVIII.

1813.

¹ Bausset,
ii. 7, 8.
Meneval,
i. 230,

² Las Cases.
O'Meara.
Meneval,
i. 227.

55.
His feelings
as to reli-
gion.

* "A l'issue de la triste cérémonie qui délia les nœuds que la fécondité de Josephine aurait rendu aussi durables que leur vie, l'Empereur rentra dans son cabinet, triste et silencieux ; il se laissa tomber sur la causeuse où il s'asseyait habituellement, dans un état d'abattement complet. Il y resta quelques minutes, la tête appuyée sur la main, et quand il se leva, sa figure était bouleversée. Quand on vint l'avertir que ses voitures étaient prêtes, il prit son chapeau, et nous entrâmes dans l'appartement de l'Impératrice. Au bruit que nous fîmes en entrant, elle se leva vivement, et se jeta en sanglotant au cou de l'Empereur, qui la serra contre sa poitrine en l'embrassant à plusieurs reprises."—MENEVAL, i. 230

† See in particular his conduct on receiving the portrait of the King of Rome the evening before the battle of Borodino.—*Ante*, Chap. LXXII. § 75.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

this merely the result of political considerations : he did not rest with Gibbon in the opinion "that all religion appears to the vulgar equally true, to the sceptic equally false, and to the philosopher equally useful." The great truths of natural religion were firmly engraven on his mind. "Look at the heavens, who made that ?" was his reply to an infidel opinion advanced in his presence. Nay, he retained through life, and evinced in death, marks of the indelible influence of the Roman Catholic faith, in which he had been baptised. He has himself told us, that he never could hear, when at St Cloud, the distant bell of the church of St Ruel without emotion ; and on every eventful crisis, whether of danger, good, or bad fortune, he seldom failed to cross himself like a good Catholic. He was profoundly impressed with a sense of the omnipotence and omnipresence of the Deity ; and firmly believed, perhaps not without reason, that he was an instrument in the hand of Providence for staying the devastation of the Revolution. During the crisis of a battle, he frequently invoked the assistance of the Most High ; his proclamations and bulletins often bore allusions to the Supreme Arbiter of events : he braved the hostility of the whole Revolutionary party of France, from his desire to re-establish the Christian faith in his dominions ; and on his deathbed he reverted without disguise to the faith of his youth, and declared that he died as he had lived, a good Catholic.¹

¹ Meneval, iii. 114, 115. Thi-
baudeau,
Conseil
d'Etat,
114.

56.
His conduct
at St He-
lena.

To complete the character of this extraordinary man, it only remains to add, that his conduct at the time of his fall, and during his exile at St Helena, exhibited the same mixture of grandeur and littleness, of selfishness and magnanimity, which characterised every other period of his life. History has not a more splendid scene to record than his heroic though unsuccessful campaign in France in 1814 ; but he lost its whole fruit by the want of moral courage to prosecute his movement upon St Dizier, and was content at last to abdicate his throne,

and retire to a little appanage assigned him by the conquerors in the island of Elba. His triumphant return from thence to Paris in the succeeding year, seemed to have outdone all that romance had figured of the marvellous; and his genius never shone forth with brighter lustre than in the preparations which he made during the Hundred Days to renew the war, as well as in the conduct of the short and decisive campaign which followed; but, although he himself has repeatedly admitted that he should have died at Waterloo,* yet he had no hesitation in fleeing from his faithful Guards on that fatal field, and purchasing his personal safety by surrendering to a British man-of-war. He bore his exile in St Helena in general with praiseworthy equanimity; and his conversations in that sequestered isle will be admired to the end of the world, as extraordinary proofs of the vigour of his genius and depth of his thoughts. Yet even there, the pettishness of a little, stood in striking contrast to the grandeur of an exalted mind: he fretted at restraints which, had he been in the place of the Allies, would possibly have been cut short by the scaffold; and the general who had been recounting the greatest achievements in modern history, the prophet who was piercing with his eye the depths of futurity, often found his serenity disturbed, and his reflection destroyed, by the appearance of an English uniform attending him in his rides, or the omission on the part of some one of his attendants to salute him with the title of Emperor.

The preceding detail, long and minute as it is, will probably be regarded by many as not the least interesting part of this history; and by all be deemed to give a truer insight into the character of Napoleon, than the public actions, embracing such great interests, and fraught with such momentous consequences, which are scattered through its volumes. They could not have been introduced earlier,

CHAP.
LXXVIII.
1813.

57.
Importance
of the pre-
ceding de-
tail.

* "I should have died, if not at Moscow, at latest at Waterloo."—LAS CASES, vii. 70, 71.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

for the events to which many of them refer, had not then occurred ; nor later, for not an instant is then left for reflection amidst the crash which attended his fall. It is during this armistice alone, when the stream of events presents

“ The torrent’s smoothness ere it dash below,”

that an opportunity occurred for collecting details concerning the character and habits of a man, who, for good or for evil, has for ever imprinted his name and deeds on the records of history.

58.
Character
of Murat.

MURAT, King of Naples, Napoleon’s brother-in-law, was also so remarkable a character during the whole wars of the Revolution, that some account of his peculiarities seems desirable. So early as the battles of Millesimo and Montenotte, in 1796, he was Napoleon’s adjutant, and by his intrepidity and daring contributed not a little to the triumphs of that memorable campaign. It was by these qualities, as well as his handsome figure and dashing manners, that he laid the foundation of the reputation which gained for him the attention of the Emperor’s sister, and, by winning her hand, led to his brilliant fortunes, and elevation to the throne of Naples. Nor was his merit in many respects inferior to his fortune. His piercing coup-d’œil ; his skill in judging of the positions of the enemy ; his chivalrous demeanour when leading his troops into battle ; his calm intrepidity in the midst of the most appalling dangers ; his tall figure and noble carriage, as well as incomparable seat on the splendid chargers which he always bestrode, gave him the air of a hero of romance, not less than the character of a first-rate cavalry officer. At the head of his gallant cuirassiers he feared no danger, never paused to number his enemies ; but with matchless hardihood threw himself into the midst of the hostile array, where he hardly ever failed to achieve the most dazzling exploits. In Napo-

leon's campaigns—at Austerlitz,¹ Jena,² and Eylau,³—Murat was always at the head of so immense a body of horse as to render success almost a matter of certainty; and it was to the weight of this formidable phalanx, generally eighteen or twenty thousand strong, that the Emperor mainly trusted for the gaining as well as the following up of his victories. Napoleon repeatedly expressed his opinion that cavalry, equally brave and well led, must break any infantry; and his whole campaigns prove how much he trusted to that powerful, and now perhaps too much underrated arm of war.* On this account he almost always had Murat at his side with his eighteen or twenty thousand horsemen in his chief battles, and generally owed to their irresistible charge his decisive success. Murat was, in the field at least, worthy of his post; and his genius and daring were equally conspicuous when he had no superiority of force to insure the advantage. Napoleon's sense of these qualities induced him to overlook, to outward appearance at least, his desertion of his post after the Russian retreat, and subsequent overtures to the Allies;⁴ and his heroic courage never appeared with brighter lustre than when he threw a last radiance over the victories of the Empire at Dresden, and stemmed the torrent of disaster at Leipsic.⁵

Napoleon had the highest opinion of Murat's military

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

¹ *Ante*, ch.
xi. § 132.

² *Ante*, ch.
xliii. § 46.

³ *Ante*, ch.
xliiv. § 67.

⁴ *Ante*, ch.
lxxiv. § 17.

⁵ *Odel*. i.
198, 199.

* "My decided opinion," said Napoleon, "is, that cavalry, if led by equally brave and resolute men, must always break infantry." An opinion contrary to that generally received, but supported by not a few of the most memorable facts recorded by history in all ages; and one which, coming from such a commander, who so well knew the value both of infantry and artillery, is well worthy of the most serious consideration.—See *LAS CASES*, vii. 184. It was by his cavalry that Hannibal conquered at the Ticino and Cannæ, and Napoleon at Austerlitz and Jena; the Asiatic horse arrested Richard Cœur-de-Lion, in Palestine; the Parthians destroyed Crassus and Julian in Asia, and Napoleon himself in Russia; the genius of Cyrus sank under, that of Alexander the Great recoiled before, the fortunes of Darius perished amidst, the Scythian cavalry; Hyder's horse all but drove the English into the Madras surf, and the English dragoons decided the fate of India at Assaye; a charge of French horsemen at Marengo placed Napoleon on the consular throne; another, of the English light dragoons on the flank of the Old Guard, hurled him to the rock of St Helena.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

59.

His military
abilities and
civil weak-
nesses.

abilities, and frequently consulted him upon the disposition of the troops, the lying of the ground, and the probable effect of any movements which were in contemplation. On these occasions, the King of Naples, who had a great degree of military frankness in his manner, and whose near connexion with the Emperor enabled him to take liberties on which no other would have ventured, spoke with remarkable decision and independence. Not unfrequently, also, Caulaincourt, on whom known fidelity and tried services had conferred an almost equal privilege, united with him in combating the most favourite projects of their chief. The habitual good humour of the warrior king, and his constant disposition to make merry even in the most serious discussions, carried him in general safely through these dangerous shoals. But it was in such military discussions that the confidence of the Emperor, and with reason, terminated ; the moment that diplomacy or civil transactions came on the tapis, Murat turned aside, or left the council-room, from conscious incapacity or insurmountable aversion. "He was a Paladin," said Napoleon, "in the field, but in the cabinet destitute either of decision or judgment. He loved, I may rather say adored me ; he was my right arm ; but without me he was nothing. In battle, he was perhaps the bravest man in the world ; left to himself, he was an *imbecile* without judgment." The Princess Caroline, his wife, had much of the intellectual power of her brother Napoleon, who had the highest opinion of her capacity. But she was ambitious, intriguing, and insatiable in her passion for riches and possessions. Talleyrand said of her, with more wit than justice, that she "had the head of Cromwell placed upon the shoulders of a handsome woman." Napoleon divined her character with more truth as well as charity, when he answered one of her numerous applications for additional settlements or grants:—"To hear you, one would suppose I had deprived you of the inheritance of the late king, your father."¹

¹ Meneval,
iii. 219.
O'Meara,
ii. 96. Odel.
i. 198, 200.

The external appearance of Napoleon formed a striking contrast to that of his royal brother-in-law. When they rode together along the front of the troops, Murat attracted universal attention by his commanding figure, his superb theatrical costume, the splendid trappings and beautiful figure of his horse, his incomparable seat in the saddle, and the imposing military dignity of his air. This dazzling display contrasted strangely, but characteristically, with the three-cornered hat, dark surtout, leather breeches, huge boots, corpulent figure, and careless seat on horseback, which have become immortal in the representations of Napoleon. The imposing aspect of Murat was, however, weakened, rather than heightened, by the rich and fantastic dress which he wore. Dark whiskers on his face contrasted with piercing blue eyes; his abundant black locks spread over the neck of a brilliant Polish dress, open above the shoulders; the collar was richly adorned with gold brocade, and from a splendid girdle of the same material hung a light sabre, straight in the blade, with the hilt set in diamonds. Wide pantaloons, of a purple or scarlet colour, richly embroidered with gold, and boots of yellow leather, completed this singular costume, which resembled rather the gorgeous trappings of the melodrama than the comparatively simple uniform of modern times.¹

But its greatest distinction was a large three-cornered hat, surmounted by a profusion of magnificent white ostrich feathers, rising from a broad gold band, which enclosed besides a superb heron-plume. His noble charger was set off with gorgeous bridle and stirrups, richly gilt after the Turkish fashion, and enveloped in trappings of azure blue, the tint of the Italian sky, which also was the prevailing colour of his liveries. Above this fantastic but dazzling attire, he wore, in cold weather, a magnificent pelisse of dark green velvet, lined and fringed with the finest sables. When he rode beside Napoleon, the latter habited after his wonted unassuming fashion, in

CHAP.
LXXXVIII.

1813.

60.

His appearance and dress, as contrasted with that of Napoleon.

¹ Odel. i.
201. Meneval, iii. 219.

61.

His extraordinary gallantry of conduct.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

this theatrical costume, it appeared a living image of splendid folly contrasting with the naked majesty of thought. It was only in his own person, however, that Napoleon was thus simple; his aides-de-camp and suite were arrayed in brilliant uniforms, and everything was studiously attended to which could set off their lustre in the eyes of the army or people. And with whatever sentiments the fantastic magnificence of the King of Naples might be regarded on peaceful parades, they yielded to an involuntary feeling of respect when his white plume was seen, like that of Alexander the Great, or Henry IV., ever foremost in the ranks of war, plunging into the thickest of the hostile ranks, regardless of the shower of balls for which it formed a never-failing mark; or when he was beheld returning from a charge, his sabre dripping wet with the blood of Cossacks, whom, in the impetuosity of overflowing courage, he had challenged and slain in single combat.¹*

¹ Odel. i. 201, 203. O'Meara, ii. 96. Las Cases.

62.
Character
and history
of Ney.

NEY is another hero whose deeds shone forth with such lustre during the whole revolutionary war, that a separate delineation of his character seems called for. Born on the 10th January 1769, in the same year as Wellington, in a humble station, the son of a common soldier who had served in the Seven Years' War, and who afterwards became a cooper, he raised himself to be a leading marshal of the empire, Prince of Moskwa, and won, by universal consent, the epithet of the "bravest of the brave." He was no common man who, even during the turbulence of the Revolution, rose in such a manner, and acquired such an appellation. In early youth, at the age of fifteen, Ney had a presentiment, as most men

* Such was his passion for danger, that he used to challenge the Cossacks to single combat; and when he had vanquished them, he would give them their liberty, often accompanied by a gold chain, which he took from round his neck, or one of the richly-jewelled watches which he always had on his person.—See O'MEARA, ii. 96; and SÉGUR, *Campagne de Russie*, ii. 327.

reserved for ultimate greatness have, that he was destined to distinction ; and in spite of all the tears of his mother, and remonstrances of his father, who had made him a miner, and wished him to remain in that humble sphere, he entered the army at Metz, on the 1st February 1787, as a private dragoon. His military air, address on horseback, and skill in the management of his sabre, soon attracted the notice of his comrades, and procured for him the dangerous honour of being selected to challenge the fencing-master of another regiment in the garrison, who had given a real or supposed insult to his corps. The commission was accepted with joy by the young soldier, the ground chosen, and the sabres crossed, when the whole party were seized by their officers ; and as duelling was then punishable with death, it was with no small difficulty, and by the intervention of a long captivity only, that he was saved from the scaffold.¹

¹ Ney's
Memoirs,
i. 3, 4.

No sooner, however, was he liberated from prison than the long-suspended duel was renewed in a secret place ; and Ney, victorious, inflicted such a wound upon his adversary in the hand that it disabled him from continuing his profession, and soon reduced him to poverty. Ney, after he had risen to greatness, did not forget the adventure, nor the calamitous consequences with which it had been attended to his opponent ; he sought him out, and settled a pension on his old antagonist. Like all men of real elevation of mind, he not only was no ways ashamed of, but took a pride in recounting the circumstances of his early life ; and when some young officers, after he was made marshal, were descanting on their descent, and the rich appointments which they enjoyed from their families, he said, "Gentlemen, I was less fortunate than you ; I got nothing from my family, and I esteemed myself rich at Metz when I had two loaves of bread on the table." When he was made marshal, a splendid party were assembled at his hotel, among whom were the chief dignitaries of the empire.

63.
His over-
flowing
courage
and simple
character.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

¹ Mémoires
du Maré-
chal Ney,
i. 3, 10.

64.
His military
character.

Amidst them all he made his way to an old captain, who stood behind the crowd at a respectful distance. "Do you recollect, captain," said he, "the time when you said to me, when I gave in my report, 'Go on, Ney, I am satisfied with you; you will make your way?'" "Perfectly," replied his old commander; "one does not easily forget having commanded a marshal of France." His father, who tenderly loved him, lived to see his highest elevation, and was never informed of his tragic fate; the weeds of his family alone informed him in 1815 that some mournful event had taken place; he never again pronounced his name, and died twelve years after, at the age of a hundred, without ever having been informed of his end.¹

The distinctive characteristic of Ney was his perfect calmness and self-possession in the midst of danger, and the invincible energy with which he pursued his object, notwithstanding the most formidable obstacles by which he was opposed. Showers of grape-shot, the onset of cuirassiers, even the terrible charge of the English bayonets, were alike unable to shake his resolution, or disturb his steady gaze. When one of his officers asked him, if on such occasions he never felt fear—"I never had time," was his simple reply. This extraordinary self-possession in danger, accompanied as it was in his case with the practised eye which discerns the exact moment of attack, and measures with accuracy the probable resistance that may be anticipated, rendered him an invaluable auxiliary to a commander-in-chief. When Napoleon, after his glorious march across the Dnieper, near Krasnoi, in 1812, said, "I have three hundred millions in the vaults of the Tuileries: I would willingly give them all to save Marshal Ney;"² he only expressed a sentiment which long experience of his vast services had suggested, and which the unexampled heroism with which he had headed the rearguard during the whole of that calamitous retreat had amply confirmed.³ It

² Fain, ii. 324; Guerre de 1812; *Ante*, ch. lxxiii. § 75.
³ Mém. de Ney, i. 19, 21. *Art. Ney, Nouv. Biog. des Contemp.*

was when danger was greatest, and safety seemed hopeless, that his courage was most conspicuous and his coolness most valuable ; and if these qualities could have insured success, Napoleon would have found victory in the last attack, headed by this heroic marshal, at Waterloo.

Nevertheless, Ney was far from being either a general of the first order, or a man of character capable of withstanding the severest trials. "He was the bravest of men," said Napoleon ; "there terminate all his faculties." Notwithstanding his great experience, he never was able to comprehend, in complicated cases, the true spirit of his instructions ; and was indebted for many of his most important successes to the admirable sagacity with which his chief of the staff, General Jomini, divined the Emperor's projects, and put his chief on the right course for their execution. It was the able counsels of this accomplished general that enabled Ney to complete the investment of Mack at Ulm, and his prompt succour which extricated him from impending ruin at Jena.¹ The diverging directions which he gave to his corps had well-nigh proved fatal to the French army in the mud of Pultusk ;² and a clearer perception of the vital importance of the movement with which he was intrusted, might have re-established the throne of Napoleon on the field of Bautzen.³ In separate command he seldom achieved anything worthy of his reputation ; and, when placed under any other general than the Emperor, his unseasonable jealousy and overbearing temper were often attended with the most injurious results.⁴

But these errors, serious as they were, affected his intellectual powers only ; his subsequent vacillation on a political crisis, and unpardonable violation of his fidelity at Fontainebleau, and of his oath during the Hundred Days, have imprinted a darker stain on his memory, and prove that if his physical courage was above, his moral firmness was below the ordinary average of human beings.

CHAP.
LXXXVIII.
1813.

65.
His inefficiency in separate command.

¹ *Ante*, ch. xl. § 60, and xliii. § 45.

² *Ante*, ch. xlii. § 29.

³ *Ante*, ch. lxxv. § 72.

⁴ *Ante*, ch. lxiii. § 88.

66.
And moral weaknesses.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

Yet, even in that melancholy catastrophe, the reflecting observer will discover the grounds for individual forgiveness and general condemnation. He will contrast the weakness, under worldly temptation, of the brightest characters of the Revolution, with the glorious fidelity, under severer trials, of la Vendée, Saragossa, Moscow, and the Tyrol ; and gladly embrace the belief, that if the white plume of Murat was sullied by defection, and the glorious forehead of Ney stained by treason, we are to ascribe those grievous blots to the vices of the age in which they lived, rather than to their own individual weakness. And he will probably rest in the conclusion, that the utmost efforts of worldly greatness fall short of the constancy in misfortune which religion inspires, or the superiority to temptation which virtue can bestow.

67.
Character
of Berthier.

Inferior to both these characters in the dazzling qualities of a hero, BERTHIER was nevertheless too important a person in the military and civil administration of Napoleon to be passed over without special notice. He was so constantly the companion of the Emperor, and all the orders from headquarters emanated so uniformly from his pen, that it was at one period imagined that his abilities had contributed not a little to the Imperial triumphs. But this impression, which never existed among those who knew them both personally, was entirely dispelled by the incapacity evinced by the major-general on occasion of the commencement of the campaign of 1809 in Germany, which brought the empire to within a hair's breadth of destruction.¹ Nevertheless, though totally destitute of the vigour and decision requisite to form a great commander, he was not without merit of a subordinate kind, and possessed some qualities of incalculable value to the Emperor. His mind was the essence of order itself. Unwearied in application, methodical in habit, indefatigable in exertion, he was constantly ready to reduce into the proper form the slightest hints of the

¹ *Ante*, ch.
lvi. § 25.

Emperor. The precision, order, and regularity which he displayed in the discharge of these important duties could not be surpassed. Night and day he was alike ready to commence the work of redaction ; no amount of writing could fatigue, no rapidity of travelling disarrange, no pressure of despatches perplex him. "This," said Napoleon, "was the great merit of Berthier ; and it was of inestimable importance to me. No other could possibly have replaced him." The constant habit of associating with the Emperor, with whom during a campaign he dined and travelled in the carriage every day, necessarily gave him a considerable degree of influence, and the pretension of his manner indicated that he assumed more than he possessed. "That was quite natural," said Napoleon ; "nothing is so imperious as weakness which feels itself supported by strength. Look at women." Like almost all the creatures of his bounty, he deserted the Emperor in the hour of his distress, and made his peace with the Bourbons at Fontainebleau. But he did not survive long to enjoy the fruits of his defection, having perished in an ignoble manner by a fall from a window, two years afterwards, in the streets of Bamberg.¹

CHAP.
LXXXVIII.
1813.

¹ Las Cases, i. 357. Biog. des Cont. par Michaud, Art. Berthier.

Such were the leading officers who, in his later years, were grouped around the standard of Napoleon, and the principal instruments for carrying into execution his mighty designs. Shining as were their abilities, daring their courage, extensive their experience, they yet fell immeasurably short of the capacious mind of their chief ; and were wholly incapable of those vast designs, and extensive combinations, which in him seemed the destined achievements of original genius. They were admirable lieutenants, perfect seconds in command, but they had nothing great in their characters. They had not the stamp of genius on their minds ; they were not, like him, born to be the rulers of empires : another proof among the many which history affords of the unbounded influ-

68.
Great inferiority of these marshals and generals to Napoleon.

CHAP.
LXXVIII.

1813.

ence of mental superiority, even in a single individual, on the destiny of nations ; and an illustration of the obvious truth, that, for the accomplishment of its fixed designs, whether of progress or retribution to mankind, Providence not unfrequently makes use of the agency of individual greatness.

APPENDIX.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

NOTE A, pp. 177 and 199.

THE 29TH BULLETIN OF THE GRAND ARMY.

Jusqu'au 6 Novembre le tems a été parfait, et le mouvement de l'armée s'est exécuté avec le plus grand succès. Le froid a commencé le 7; dès ce moment chaque nuit nous avons perdu plusieurs centaines de chevaux qui mouraient au bivouac. Arrivés à Smolensk, nous avons déjà perdu bien des chevaux de cavalerie et d'artillerie.

L'armée Russe de Volhynie était opposée à notre droite. Notre droite quitta la ligne d'opérations de Minsk, et prit pour pivot de ses opérations la ligne de Varsovie. L'Empereur apprit à Smolensk, le 9, ce changement de ligne d'opérations, et présuma ce que ferait l'ennemi. Quelque dur qu'il lui parût de se mettre en mouvement dans une si cruelle saison, le nouvel état des choses le nécessitait. Il espérait arriver à Minsk, ou du moins sur la Bérésina, avant l'ennemi; il partit le 13 de Smolensk; le 16 il coucha à Krasnoï. Le froid, qui avait commencé le 7, s'acerut subitement; et du 14 au 15 et au 16, le thermomètre marqua 16 et 18 degrés au-dessous de glace. Les chemins furent couverts de verglas; les chevaux de cavalerie, d'artillerie, de train, périssaient toutes les nuits—non par centaines mais par milliers, surtout les chevaux de France et d'Allemagne. Plus de 30,000 chevaux périrent en peu de jours; notre cavalerie se trouva toute à pied; notre artillerie et nos transports se trouvaient sans attelage. Il fallut abandonner et détruire une bonne partie de nos pièces, et de nos munitions de guerre et de bouche. Cette armée, si belle le 6, était bien différente dès le 14—presque sans cavalerie, nous ne pouvions pas nous éclairer à un quart de lieue; cependant, sans artillerie, nous ne pouvions pas risquer une bataille, et attendre de pied ferme; il fallait marcher pour ne pas être contraint à une bataille, que le défaut de munitions nous empêchait de désirer; il fallait occuper un certain espace pour ne pas être tournés, et cela sans cavalerie qui éclairât et liât les colonnes. Cette difficulté, jointe à un froid excessif subitement venu, rendit notre situation fâcheuse. Les hommes que la nature n'a pas trempés assez fortement pour être au-dessus de toutes les chances du sort et de la fortune, parurent ébranlés, perdirent leur gaieté, leur bonne humeur, et ne révèrent que malheurs et catastrophes; ceux qu'elle a créés supérieurs à tout, conservèrent leur gaieté et leurs manières ordinaires, et virent une nouvelle gloire dans des difficultés à surmonter.

L'ennemi, qui voyait sur les chemins les traces de cette affreuse calamité qui frappait l'armée Française, chercha à en profiter. Il enveloppait toutes les colonnes par ses Cosaques, qui enlevaient, comme les Arabes dans les déserts, les trains et les voitures qui s'écartaient. Cette méprisable cavalerie, qui ne fait que du bruit,

et n'est pas capable d'enfoncer une compagnie de voltigeurs, se rendit redoutable à la faveur des circonstances. Cependant, l'ennemi eut à se repentir de toutes les tentatives sérieuses qu'il voulut entreprendre ; il fut culbuté par le Viceroy, au devant duquel il s'était placé, et il y perdit beaucoup de monde. Le Duc d'Elchingen, qui avec trois mille hommes faisait l'arrière-garde, avait fait sauter les remparts de Smolensk. Il fut cerné, et se trouva dans une position critique ; il s'en tira avec cette intrépidité qui le distingue. Après avoir tenu l'ennemi éloigné de lui pendant toute la journée du 18, et l'avoir constamment repoussé, à la nuit il fit un mouvement par le flanc droit, passa le Borystène, et déjoua tous les calculs de l'ennemi. Le 19, l'armée passa le Borystène à Orza, et l'armée Russe fatiguée, ayant perdu beaucoup de monde, cessa là ses tentatives. L'armée de Volhynie s'était portée dès le 16 sur Minsk, et marchait sur Borisow. Le Général Dombrowski défendit la tête-de-pont de Borisow avec 3000 hommes. Le 23, il fut forcé, et obligé d'évacuer cette position. L'ennemi passa alors la Bérésina, marchant sur Bobr—la division Lambert faisait l'avant-garde. Le 2^e corps, commandé par le Duc de Reggio, qui était à Tscherein, avait reçu l'ordre de se porter sur Borisow, pour assurer à l'armée le passage de la Bérésina. Le 21, le Duc de Reggio rencontra la division Lambert à 4 lieues de Borisow, l'attaqua, la battit, lui fit 2000 prisonniers, lui prit six pièces de canon, 500 voitures de bagage de l'armée de Volhynie, et rejeta l'ennemi sur la rive droite de la Bérésina. Le Général Berkeim, avec le 4^e de cuirassiers, se distingua par une belle charge. L'ennemi ne trouva son salut qu'en brûlant le pont, qui a plus de 300 toises. Cependant, l'ennemi occupait tous les passages de la Bérésina ; cette rivière est large de 40 toises, elle charrait assez de glaces, mais ses bords sont couverts de marais de 300 toises de long, ce qui la rend un obstacle difficile à franchir. Le général ennemi avait placé ses 4 divisions dans différents débouchés où il présumait que l'armée Française voudrait passer. Le 26, à la pointe du jour, l'Empereur, après avoir trompé l'ennemi par divers mouvements faits dans la journée du 25, se porta sur le village de Studyvinca, et fit aussitôt, malgré une division de l'ennemi, et en sa présence, jeter deux ponts sur la rivière. Le Duc de Reggio passa, attaqua l'ennemi, et le mena battant deux heures ; l'ennemi se retira sur la tête-de-pont de Borisow. Le Général Legrand, officier du premier mérite, fut blessé grièvement mais non dangereusement. Toute la journée du 26 et du 27 l'armée passa.

Le Duc de Bellune, commandant le 9^e corps, avait reçu ordre de suivre le mouvement du Duc de Reggio, de faire l'arrière-garde, et de contenir l'armée Russe de la Dwina qui le suivait. La division Partonneaux faisait l'arrière-garde de ce corps. Le 27 à midi le Duc de Bellune arriva avec deux divisions au pont de Studyvinca. La division Partonneaux partit à la nuit de Borisow. Une brigade de cette division qui formait l'arrière-garde, et qui était chargée de brûler les ponts, partit à sept heures du soir ; elle arriva entre 10 et 11 heures ; elle chercha sa première brigade et son général de division, qui étaient partis deux heures avant, et qu'elle n'avait pas rencontrés en route. Ses recherches furent vaines : on conçut alors des inquiétudes. Tout ce qu'on a pu connaître depuis, c'est que cette première brigade, partie à 5 heures, s'est égarée à 6, a pris à droite au lieu de prendre à gauche, et a fait deux ou trois lieues dans cette direction ; que dans la nuit, et transie de froid, elle s'est ralliée aux feux de l'ennemi, qu'elle a pris pour ceux de l'armée Française ; entourée ainsi, elle aura été enlevée. Cette cruelle méprise doit nous avoir fait perdre 2000 hommes d'infanterie, 300 chevaux, et trois pièces d'artillerie. Des bruits couraient que le général de division n'était pas avec sa colonne, et avait marché isolément. Toute l'armée ayant passé le 28 au matin, le Duc de Bellune gardait la tête-de-pont sur la rive gauche : le Duc de Reggio, et derrière lui toute l'armée, était sur la rive droite. Borisow ayant été évacué, les armées de la Dwina et de Volhynie communi-

quèrent ; elles concertèrent une attaque. Le 28, à la pointe du jour, le Duc de Reggio fit prévenir l'Empereur qu'il était attaqué : une demi-heure après, le Duc de Bellune le fut sur la rive gauche : l'armée prit les armes. Le Duc d'Elchingen se porta à la suite du Duc de Reggio, et le Duc de Trévise derrière le Duc d'Elchingen. Le combat devint vif : l'ennemi voulut déborder notre droite ; le Général Doumerc commandant la 5^e division de cuirassiers, et qui faisait partie du 2^e corps, resté sur la Dwina, ordonna une charge de cavalerie aux 4^e et 5^e régiments de cuirassiers, au moment où la légion de la Vistule s'engageait dans les bois pour percer le centre de l'ennemi, qui fut culbuté et mis en déroute. Les braves cuirassiers forcèrent successivement six carrés d'infanterie, et mirent en déroute la cavalerie ennemie qui venait au secours de son infanterie : 6 mille prisonniers, deux drapeaux, et 6 pièces de canon, tombèrent en notre pouvoir.

De son côté, le Duc de Bellune fit charger vigoureusement l'ennemi, le battit, lui fit 500 ou 600 prisonniers, et le tint hors la portée du canon du pont. Le Général Fournier fit une belle charge de cavalerie. Dans le combat de la Bérésina, l'armée de Volhynie a beaucoup souffert. Le Duc de Reggio a été blessé : sa blessure n'est pas dangereuse ; c'est une balle qu'il a reçue dans le côté. Le lendemain 29, nous restâmes sur le champ de bataille. Nous avions à choisir entre deux routes : celle de Minsk et celle de Wilna. La route de Minsk passe au milieu d'une forêt et de marais incultes, et il eût été impossible à l'armée de s'y nourrir. La route de Wilna, au contraire, passe dans de très bons pays. L'armée, sans cavalerie, faible en munitions, horriblement fatiguée de cinquante jours de marche, trainant à sa suite ses malades et les blessés de tant de combats, avait besoin d'arriver à ses magasins. Le 30, le quartier-général fut à Plechnitsi : le 1^{er} Décembre à Slaiki, et le 3 à Molodetschov, où l'armée a reçu les premiers convois de Wilna. Tous les officiers et soldats blessés, et tout ce qui est embarrassé, bagage, etc, ont été dirigés sur Wilna.

Dire que l'armée a besoin de rétablir sa discipline, de se refaire, de remonter sa cavalerie, son artillerie, et son matériel, c'est le résultat de l'exposé qui vient d'être fait. Le repos est son premier besoin. Le matériel et les chevaux arrivent. Le Général Bourcier a déjà plus de vingt mille chevaux de remonte dans différents dépôts. L'artillerie a déjà réparé ses pertes. Les généraux, les officiers, et les soldats, ont beaucoup souffert de la fatigue et de la disette. Beaucoup ont perdu leurs bagages par suite de la perte de leurs chevaux : quelques-uns par le fait des embuscades des Cosaques. Les Cosaques ont pris nombre d'hommes isolés, d'ingénieurs géographes qui levaient les positions, et d'officiers blessés qui marchaient sans précaution, préférant courir des risques plutôt que de marcher posément et dans des convois. Les rapports des officiers-généraux commandant les corps, feront connaître les officiers et soldats qui se sont le plus distingués, et les détails de tous ces mémorables événements. Dans tous ces mouvements, l'Empereur a toujours marché au milieu de sa Garde, la cavalerie commandée par le Maréchal Duc d'Istrie, et l'infanterie commandée par le Duc de Dantzick. S. M. a été satisfaite du bon esprit que sa Garde a montré : elle a toujours été prête à se porter partout où les circonstances l'auraient exigé : mais les circonstances ont toujours été telles que sa simple présence a suffi, et qu'elle n'a pas été dans le cas de donner.

Le Prince de Neuchâtel, le grand-maréchal, le grand écuyer, et tous les aides-de-camp et les officiers militaires de la maison de l'Empereur, ont toujours accompagné S. M. Notre cavalerie était tellement démontée, que l'on a pu réunir les officiers auxquels il restait un cheval, pour en former quatre compagnies de 150 hommes chacune. Les généraux y faisaient les fonctions de capitaines, et les colonels celles de sous-officiers. Cet escadron sacré, commandé par le Général Grouchy, et sous les ordres du Roi de Naples, ne perdait pas de vue l'Empereur dans tous les mouvements. La santé de S. M. n'a jamais été meilleure.—17 Décembre, 1812.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

NOTE A, p. 278.

STATISTICS OF THE FRENCH EMPIRE, ON 27th FEBRUARY 1813.

Population of the whole Empire, . . . 42,700,000 souls.

VALUE OF PRODUCTIONS IN AGRICULTURE.

	Francs.	£
230,000,000 quintals of grain, . . .	2,300,000,000 or	92,000,000
4,000,000 hectolitres wine, . . .	800,000,000 —	32,000,000
Woods,	100,000,000 —	4,000,000
Lint,	80,000,000 —	3,200,000
Oil,	250,000,000 —	10,000,000
Tobacco,	12,000,000 —	480,000
Silk,	30,000,000 —	1,200,000
Wool, 120,000,000 lb.,	120,000,000 —	5,200,000
Carcases of sheep,	56,000,000 —	2,300,000
Annual increment on 3,500,000 horses, viz., 280,000 four-year-old horses,	75,000,000 —	3,000,000
Annual consumption of horned cattle, viz., 250,000 cows and oxen, 2,500,000 calves,	161,000,000 —	6,400,000
Skins of these animals,	36,000,000 —	1,500,000
Milk, butter, and cheese,	150,000,000 —	6,000,000
4,900,000 pigs annually consumed,	274,000,000 —	11,000,000
Minerals,	50,000,000 —	2,000,000
Coals,	50,000,000 —	2,000,000
560,000,000 of pounds of salt,	28,000,000 —	1,120,000
Fruits, vegetables, &c. &c.,	450,000,090 —	18,000,000
Total agricultural productions,	5,032,000,000	201,400,000

MANUFACTURES.

Silk manufactures,	84,000,000 or	3,360,000
Woollen do.,	210,000,000 —	8,400,000
Linens and lace do.,	139,000,000 —	5,600,000
Cotton goods,	235,000,000 —	9,400,000
Iron manufactures,	70,000,000 —	2,800,000
Glass, coarse linen, &c.,	82,000,000 —	3,280,000
Beer brewed,	40,000,000 —	1,600,000
Cider,	60,000,000 —	2,400,000
New branches of industry, with various lesser articles,	65,000,000 —	2,600,000
Operations on the rude material, as linen, cotton, cloth,	985,000,000 —	39,440,000
	639,600,000 —	25,600,000
Total manufacturing industry,	1,624,600,000 —	65,000,000

FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC COMMERCE.

	Francs.	£
Foreign and domestic Commerce,	378,000,000 or	15,000,000

SUMMARY.

Total agriculture,	5,032,000,000 or	201,400,000
Do. manufactures,	1,624,600,000 —	65,000,000
Foreign commerce and lesser branches,	378,000,000 —	15,000,000
Grand total,	7,034,600,000 —	281,400,000

Exports in 1810,	376,000,000 or	15,040,000
Imports,	336,000,000 —	13,500,000

—*Report of MONTALIVET, 27th February 1813; GOLDSMITH'S Recueil, vi. 77, 84, 144.*

NOTE B, p. 280.

The following account of the estimated cost of, and sums actually expended on, the principal great works and architectural structures of Napoleon, from 1800 to 1813, will be not a little interesting to the lovers of public improvements and the fine arts:—

		Estimate of Total Cost.		Sums expended from 1800 to 1813.	
		Francs.	£	Francs.	£
Road over the Simplon,		9,200,000 or	368,000	6,100,000 or	244,000
Do. over Mont Cenis,		16,000,000 —	640,000	13,500,000 —	240,000
Do. over the Corniche,		15,500,000 —	620,000	6,500,000 —	260,000
Do. over Mont Genevre,		5,400,000 —	216,000	2,800,000 —	112,000
Do. from Paris to Amsterdam,		6,300,000 —	252,000	4,300,000 —	172,000
Do. from Paris to Madrid,		8,000,000 —	320,000	4,200,000 —	168,000
Do. from Paris to Hamburg,		9,800,000 —	392,000	6,000,000 —	240,000
Do. from Lyons to Chambéry,		4,000,000 —	160,000	100,000 —	4,000
Cherbourg,				26,000,000 or	1,240,000
Antwerp,				18,000,000 —	720,000
Flushing,				5,600,000 —	230,000
Havre,				252,000 —	10,500
Dunkirk,				4,500,000 —	180,000
Canal of Ourcq at Paris,		38,000,000 —	1,520,000	19,500,000 —	680,000
Do. of St Quentin,		11,000,000 —	440,000	10,000,000 —	400,000
Do. of the Seine and Aube,		15,000,000 —	600,000	6,000,000 —	240,000
Do. Napoleon,		17,000,000 —	680,000	10,500,000 —	420,000
Do. of Burgundy,		24,000,000 —	960,000	6,800,000 —	272,000
Do. from Nantes to Brest,		28,000,000 —	1,120,000	1,200,000 —	48,000
Draining of Rochefort,		7,000,000 —	280,000	3,000,000 —	120,000
Do. of Larentan,		4,500,000 —	260,000	2,600,000 —	104,000
Quays of Paris,		15,000,000 —	600,000	11,000,000 —	440,000
Church of the Madeleine,		8,000,000 —	320,000	2,000,000 —	80,000

	Estimate of total cost.		Sums expended from 1800 to 1813.	
	Francs.	£	Francs.	£
Bourse,	6,000,000	— 240,000	2,500,000	— 100,000
Palace of Legislative Body, .	3,000,000	— 120,000	3,000,000	— 120,000
Palace of the Archives, .	20,000,000	— 800,000	1,000,000	— 40,000
Column in the Place Vendôme,	1,500,000	— 60,000	1,500,000	— 60,000
Arch de l'Etoile,	9,000,000	— 360,000	4,500,000	— 180,000
Jardin des Plantes,	3,000,000	— 120,000	800,000	— 32,000
Slaughter Houses,	13,500,000	— 530,000	6,700,000	— 274,000
Markets,	8,500,000	— 340,000	4,000,000	— 160,000
Halle Aux Vins,	12,000,000	— 480,000	4,000,000	— 160,000
Grande Halle,	12,000,000	— 480,000	2,600,000	— 104,000
Bridge of Austerlitz,	3,000,000	— 120,000	3,000,000	— 120,000
Do. of Jena,	6,200,000	— 248,000	4,800,000	— 192,000
Do. of Arts,	900,000	— 36,000	900,000	— 36,000
Panthéon or Ste Geneviève, .	2 500,000	— 100,000	2,000,000	— 80,000
Louvre,	14,000,000	— 560,000	11,100,000	— 440,000
Musée Napoléon,	36,000,000	— 1,440,000	10,300,000	— 412,000
Arch du Carrousel,	1,400,000	— 52,000	1,400,000	— 52,000
Palace of King of Rome,	30,000,000	— 1,200,000	2,500,000	— 100,000
—See <i>Rapport de MONTALIVET</i> , 25th Feb. 1813; <i>Moniteur</i> , 26th Feb. 1813; and <i>GOLDSMITH'S Recueil</i> , vi. 77, 120; and <i>FAIN, Guerre de 1813</i> , i. 80, 91.				

NOTE C, p. 281.

FRENCH FINANCES FOR THE YEAR 1812.

RECEIPTS.		Francs.
Direct Contribution,		336,725,106
Régie de l'enregistrement—		
Droits ordinaires,		135,152,257
Bois,		2,706,387
Administration des douanes—		
Droits ordinaires,		64,991,621
Droits extraordinaires,		25,474,574
Droits sur le sel,		38,779,887
Régie des droits réunis—		
Droits ordinaires,	}	115,335,770
Tabacs,		
Loterie,		10,058,084
Postes,		4,708,656
Sels et tabacs au de-là des Alpes,		3,881,076
Salines de l'est,		3,000,000
Monnaies,		1,000,000
Poudres et salopêtres—		
Illyrie,		7,445,034
Recettes diverses et accidentales,		1,701,396
Recettes extérieures,		30,000,000
Total Receipts,		780,959,847 or £31,238,000

EXPENDITURE.

	Francs.
Dette publique et pensions,	142,046,343
Liste civile (y compris les princes Français)	28,000,000
Grand juge, ministre de la justice,	25,683,246
Relations extérieures,	8,364,295
Intérieur,	58,540,028
Finances,	23,367,943
Trésor impérial,	8,367,889
Guerre (ministère,)	295,764,866
Guerre (administration,)	187,742,915
Marine (y compris le supplément accordé par le } décret du 5 Avril 1812), }	149,022,182
Cultes,	16,627,824
Police Générale,	1,631,341
Frais de négociations,	8,500,000
Fonds de réserve,	
Total,	953,658,772 or £38,146,000

—*Exercice, 1812 au 1 Jan. 1813 ;* GOLDSMITH, vi. 144, 145.

CHAPTER LXXV.

NOTE A, p. 372.

FRENCH AND ALLIES AT THE BATTLE OF BAUTZEN.

FRENCH.

The Guards under Marshal Mortier,	20,000
3d Corps, Ney,	20,000
4th Corps, Bertrand,	15,000
5th Corps, Lauriston,	12,000
6th Corps, Marshal Marmont,	20,000
7th Corps, Reynier,	14,000
11th Corps, Marshal Macdonald,	12,000
12th Corps, Marshal Oudinot,	25,000
The Corps of Cavalry under General Latour Maubourg,	10,000
Grand total,	148,000

RUSSIANS.

The Third Army of the West under General Barclay de Tolly,	13,550
The Advanced Guard of General Milaradowich,	7,550
The Corps-de-bataille of Prince Gorchakoff, the 11th,	15,050
The Reserve of the Grand duke Constantine,	19,600
The Russian Corps of Lieutenant-General Kleist,	2,950
Detached Corps,	9,300
Total,	68,000

PRUSSIANS.

The Corps of Cavalry under Blucher,	16,700
The Corps of Lieutenants-General York and Kleist,	7,600
The Battalions of Reserve under Lieutenant-Colonel Stutterheim,	3,700
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Total—Prussians,	28,000
Do. —Russians,	68,000
<hr/>	
Grand total,	96,000

—SCHOELL, vol. x. p. 211.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

NOTE A, p. 430.

MILITARY FORCE OF GREAT BRITAIN, AND ITS COST, IN 1813.

	Men.	Great Britain. Charge.	Ireland. Charge.
Land Forces, (including various contingencies),	227,442	£3,196,188	331,012
British regiments in the East Indies,	28,009	836,649	—
Troops and companies for recruiting do.,	533	30,236	—
Embodied militia,	93,210	1,983,961	1,098,529
Staff and garrisons,	—	513,792	109,226
Full pay to supernumerary officers,	—	32,088	940
Public departments,	—	308,201	11,960
Half-pay,	—	206,250	25,443
In-Pensioners of Chelsea and Kilmainham hospitals,	—	39,284	18,332
Out-pensioners of ditto,	—	432,695	91,239
Widows' pensions,	—	50,011	8,103
Volunteer corps, cavalry,	68,000	209,237	266,123
Local militia,	304,000	636,623	—
Foreign corps,	32,163	1,174,019	31,623
Royal Military College,	—	38,993	—
Royal Military Asylum,	—	23,096	—
Allowance to retired chaplains,	—	19,394	1,923
Medicines and hospital expenses,	—	105,000	22,081
Compassionate list,	—	30,055	—
Barrack department, (Ireland,)	—	—	460,583
Commissariat department, (Ireland,)	—	—	295,605
Superannuated allowances,	—	11,630	4,334
<hr/>		<hr/>	
Total military force,	753,357		
Deduct local militia, and volunteers,	372,000		
<hr/>		<hr/>	
Total regulars and militia,	381,357	13,921,494	3,213,063
Deduct regiments in East Indies,	28,009	836,649	—
<hr/>		<hr/>	
Remain to be provided for, 1813,	353,348	13,044,844	3,213,063
—regulars and militia, exclusive of the native troops in the East Indies, who were,	201,000		

—*Parliamentary Debates*, vol. xxiv. p. 346.

NOTE B, p. 432.

PUBLIC INCOME OF GREAT BRITAIN FOR THE YEAR 1813.

PERMANENT REVENUE.

	Net Produce.
Customs,	£8,086,313
Excise,	18,526,839
Stamps,	5,552,460
Land and assessed taxes,	7,803,459
Post-office,	1,619,136
Pensions, 1s. in the pound,	20,423
Salaries, 6d. in the pound,	12,151
Hackney coaches,	22,245
Hawkers and pedlars,	18,201
Total permanent and annual duties,	£41,661,227

SMALL BRANCHES OF THE HEREDITARY REVENUE.

Alienation fines,	£8,392
Post fines,	3,953
Seizures,	22,638
Composition and proffers,	586
Crown lands,	83,303

EXTRAORDINARY RESOURCES AND WAR TAXES.

Customs,	£3,235,358
Excise,	6,113,853
Property tax,	14,588,286
Arrears of income-duty,	1,593
Lottery, net profit (of which one-third part is for the service of Ireland,)	238,666
Moneys paid on account of the interest of loans raised for the service of Ireland,	3,198,956
On account of the balance due by Ireland on joint expenditure of the United Kingdom,	3,956,286
On account of the commissioners for issuing exchequer bills for Granada,	54,200
On account of the commissioners for issuing commercial exchequer bills,	490,591
On account of the interest of a loan, &c., granted to the Prince-Regent of Portugal,	53,130
Surplus fees of regulated public offices,	107,355
Impressed money repaid by sundry public accountants, &c. including interest,	56,504
Other moneys paid to the public,	65,660
Total, independent of loans,	£73,940,537
Loans paid into the exchequer, including £6,000,000 for the service of Ireland,	35,050,534
Grand total,	£108,991,071

—*Annual Register* for 1814, p. 367.

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE OF GREAT BRITAIN FOR THE YEAR 1813.

I. For interest on the public debt of Great Britain unredeemed, including annuities for lives, and terms of years,		£39,815,846
II. Interest on exchequer bills,		2,081,529
III. Civil List,	£1,028,000	
IV. Other charges on the consolidated fund, viz.:		
Courts of justice,	69,992	
Mint,	13,333	
Allowance to royal family,	332,412	
Salaries and allowances,	67,955	
Bounties,	79,956	
	<hr/>	1,591,648
V. Civil government of Scotland,		133,176
VI. Other payments in anticipation of the exchequer receipts, bounties for fisheries, manufactures, corn, &c.,	228,341	
Pensions on the hereditary revenue,	2,770	
Militia and deserters' warrants,	134,614	
	<hr/>	365,725
VII. Navy,	11,372,513	
The victualling department,	6,568,320	
The transport service,	565,790	
Miscellaneous service,	490,000	
	<hr/>	4,055,790
		21,996,623
VIII. Ordnance,	3,404,527	
IX. Army, viz.—Ordinary services,	18,500,790	
Extraordinary services and subsidies,	22,262,951	
	<hr/>	40,763,741
Deduct the remittances and advances to other countries,	11,294,416	
	<hr/>	29,469,325
X. Loans, &c. to other countries, viz.:		
Ireland,	4,700,416	
Sicily,	600,000	
Portugal,	2,000,000	
Spain,	1,697,136	
Sweden,	1,563,804	
Russia,	1,758,436	
Prussia,	1,757,669	
Austria,	545,612	
Hanover,	15,166	
Holland,	419,996	
North of Europe,	963,174	
Emperor of Morocco,	14,419	
	<hr/>	16,035,828
Total expenditure,		114,761,000
XI. Miscellaneous services:—		
At Home,	3,507,934	
Abroad,	497,890	
	<hr/>	4,005,824
		<hr/>
		£118,766,875

Deduct sums which, although included in this account, form no part of the expenditure of Great Britain, viz.—

Loan for Ireland,	4,300,416	
Interest at 1 per cent, and management on Portuguese loan,	57,170	
Principal, interest, &c. of commercial exchequer bills,	4,525	
Sinking Fund on loan to the East India Company,	141,091	
	<hr/>	4,503,202
		<hr/>
		£114,263,673

—*Annual Register* for 1814, p. 374.

NOTE C, p. 445.

TABLE (I.) EXHIBITING THE PROGRESS OF THE SINKING FUND FROM ITS COMMENCEMENT IN 1786 TO 1813.

	Stock redeemed.	Money applied to redemption of debt in Sinking Fund.
At 1st Feb. 1787,	£662,750	
— 1788,	1,503,054	£1,000,000
— 1789,	1,506,350	150,000
— 1790,	1,558,850	152,250
— 1791,	1,587,500	157,367
— 1792,	1,507,100	162,479
— 1793,	1,962,650	1,834,281
— 1794,	2,174,405	1,634,615
— 1795,	2,804,945	1,872,957
— 1796,	3,083,455	2,143,596
— 1797,	4,390,670	2,639,724
— 1798,	6,790,023	3,369,218
— 1799,	8,102,875	4,294,325
— 1800,	10,550,094	4,649,871
— 1801,	10,713,168	4,767,992
— 1802,	10,491,325	5,310,511
— 1803,	9,436,389	5,922,979
— 1804,	13,181,667	6,287,940
— 1805,	12,860,629	6,851,200
— 1806,	13,759,697	7,615,167
— 1807,	15,341,799	8,323,329
— 1808,	16,064,962	9,479,165
— 1809,	16,181,689	10,188,607
— 1810,	16,656,643	10,904,451
— 1811,	17,884,234	11,660,601
— 1812,	20,733,354	12,502,860
— 1813,	24,246,059	13,483,160
— 1814,	27,522,230	15,379,262

—MOREAU'S *Tables*, given in PEBRER, pp. 154, 247.

TABLE (II.) SHOWING THE PROGRESSIVE DIMINUTION OF THE SINKING FUND,
AND GROWTH OF THE DEFICIT, FROM 1813 TO 1842.

	Deficit of Revenue.	Stock redeemed.	Money applied to redemption of debt in Sinking Fund.
1st February 1814,	—	£27,522,230	£15,379,262
— 1815,	—	22,558,683	14,120,963
— 1816,	—	24,001,083	13,452,096
— 1817,	—	23,117,841	1,826,814
5th January 1818,	—	19,460,982	1,624,606
— 1819,	—	19,648,469	3,193,130
— 1820,	—	31,191,702	1,918,019
— 1821,	—	24,518,885	4,104,457
— 1822,	—	23,605,981	2,962,564
— 1823,	—	17,966,680	5,261,725
— 1824,	—	4,828,530	6,456,559
— 1825,	—	10,583,132	9,900,725
— 1826,	—	3,313,834	1,195,531
— 1827,	—	2,886,528	2,023,028
— 1828,	—	7,281,414	4,667,965
— 1829,	—	4,964,807	2,670,003
— 1830,	—	2,732,162	1,935,465
— 1831,	—	3,469,216	2,763,858
— 1832,	—	7,364	5,696
— 1833,	—	1,439,261	1,023,784
— 1834,	—	2,561,866	1,776,378
— 1835,	—	1,942,111	1,270,050
— 1836,	—	2,232,142	1,590,727
— 1837,	—	1,932,671	1,252,041
— 1838,	£1,428,000	—	—
— 1839,	430,000	—	—
— 1840,	1,457,000	—	—
— 1841,	1,851,000	—	—
— 1842,	2,456,000	—	—

—MOREAU'S *Tables*, and PEBRER, 247; *Parl. Pap. May* 18, 141; and *Finance Accounts* for 1837, 1838, 1839, and 1841.

NOTE D, p. 461.

IMPERIAL MUSTER-ROLLS OF THE FRENCH ARMIES IN SPAIN, 15th March 1813.

	Present under arms.		Detached.		Hospital.	TOTAL.		
	Men.	Horses.	Men.	Horses.	Men.	Men.	Cavalry.	Artillery.
Army of the South,	36,605	6,602	2,060	1,617	7,144	45,809	8,650	2,601
— the Centre,	16,227	1,966	940	76	2,401	19,568	2,790	451
— Portugal,	34,825	3,654	157	—	7,731	42,713	6,726	2,141
— Arragon,	36,315	3,852	55	—	2,442	38,812	6,123	1,799
— Catalonia,	27,323	1,109	110	—	2,013	29,446	1,884	635
— the North,	40,476	1,978	41	—	8,032	48,547	3,171	830
— Bayonne,	3,877	55	80	—	634	6,591	78	21
Total,	195,648	19,216	3,443	1,693	30,397	231,436	29,422	8,478

—NAPIER'S *Peninsular War*, vol. v. p. 618.

MORNING STATE OF THE ANGLO-PORTUGUESE ARMY, 21st *June* 1813.

	PRESENT.		TOTAL.	
	Under Arms.	On Command.	Present.	On Command.
British cavalry, . . .	7,791	851		
Portuguese cavalry, . .	1,452	225		
Total cavalry, . . .	—	—	9,243	1,076
British infantry, . . .	23,658	1,771		
Portuguese infantry, . .	23,905	1,038		
Total infantry, . . .	—	—	47,563	2,809
Sabres and bayonets, . .	.	.	56,806	3,885
Deduct the 6th division, left at Medina de Pomar, . .	.	.	6,320	
Total sabres and bayonets, . .	.	.	50,486	3,885

SPANISH AUXILIARIES.

Infantry :—						Men.
Murillo's division, about . . . . .	.	.	.	.	.	3,000
Giron's division, about . . . . .	.	.	.	.	.	12,000
Carlos d'Espagna's division, about . . . . .	.	.	.	.	.	3,000
Longa's division, about . . . . .	.	.	.	.	.	3,000
Cavalry :—						
Renne Villemur, about . . . . .	.	.	.	.	.	1,000
Julian Sanchez, about . . . . .	.	.	.	.	.	1,000
	Total, Spanish,					23,000
	Total, Anglo-Portuguese,					50,486
	Grand total,					73,486
	Cannon,					90

—NAPIER'S *Peninsular War*, vol. v. p. 622.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

NOTE A, p. 510.

DETAILED STATE OF THE FRENCH ARMY OF SPAIN *July* 1813.*Right Wing.*—Lieutenant-General REILLE.

	Effective Men.	Horses.	Total Effective Men.	Total Horses.	Effective and Non- effective Men.	Grand Total.
1st division, Foy, 9 battalions,	5,922	189	17,235	450	6,748	21,330
7th ditto, Maucune, 7 battalions,	4,186	110			5,676	
9th ditto, la Martinière, 11 battalions,	7,127	151			8,906	

Centre.—DROUET, Count D'ERLON.

2d division, d'Armagnac, 8 batts.	6,961	116	20,959	624	8,580	23,935
3d ditto, Abbé, 9 ditto,	8,030	285			8,728	
6th ditto, Daricau, 8 ditto,	5,963	223			6,627	

Left Wing.—Lieutenant-General CLAUSEL.

	Effective Men.	Horses.	Total Effective Men.	Total Horses.	Effective and Non- effective Men.	Grand Total.
4th division, Conroux, 9 battalions,	7,056	150	17,218	432	7,477	20,265
5th ditto, Vandermoeren, 7 ditto,	4,181	141			5,201	
8th ditto, Taupin, 10 ditto	5,981	141			7,587	

Reserve.—General VILLATTE.

French,	14,959	2,091	14,959			17,929
Foreign, 4 battalions of the Rhine,			}	Strength of these not given.		
4 battalions of Italians, General St Pol,						
4 battalions, Spaniards, General Casabianca,						

Cavalry.—PIERRE SOULT.

22 squadrons,	4,723	4,416	7,081	6,691	5,098	7,621
Ditto, Treilhard,	2,358	2,275			2,523	
Total, according to the organisation in the field,			77,452	7,797		91,080
exclusive of the foreign battalions.						

Forces detached.

	Men under Arms.	Effective and Non- effective Men.
Troops not in the field,	14,938	16,946
General Rey, garrison of San Sebastian, 1st July,		
forming part of this number,	2,751	3,086
Cassan, ditto, of Pampeluna, 1st July,	2,951	3,121
Lammette, ditto, of Santona, 1st May,	1,045	1,674
Second reserve, not in the above,	5,595	6,103

Summary.

	Effective Men.	Horses.	Effective and Non- effective Men.
Grand total,	104,710	10,676	122,016

NOTE B, p. 513.

ANGLO-PORTUGUESE ARMY UNDER WELLINGTON'S COMMAND,

from the Morning States for 24th July 1813.

	Officers, Sergeants, etc.	Rank and File.	TOTAL. Men.	TOTAL. Horses.
British and German cavalry present under arms,	916	5,834	6,750	5,834
Ditto infantry,	4,665	29,916	34,581	—
Portuguese cavalry,	251	1,241	1,492	1,178
Ditto infantry,	2,894	20,565	23,459	—
Total sabres and bayonets, exclusive of sick } and absent on command, . . . }	8,726	57,556	66,282	7,012
Artillerymen and drivers, . . .			4,000	
Grand total,			70,282	14,024

NOTE C, p. 517.

The following is the state of the 92d regiment at the time of the battle in the Puerto de Maya.—Return of the number of each country composing the 1st battalion of the 92d Highland regiment, taken from the Prize List, Vitoria, 1813 :—

Country.	Sergeants.	Corps.	Drum.	Priv.	Total.
Scotland, . .	56	47	8	784	895
England, . .			2	34	36
Ireland, . .		2	1	58	61
Foreign, . .	1		3		4
Unknown, . .		3		14	17
Grand total,	57	52	14	890	1,013

Copy extracted from Inspection Report, 1st battalion 92d Highland regiment, 15th October 1813 :—

Country.	Sergeants.	Corps.	Drum.	Priv.	Total.
Scotland, . .	62	45	13	702	822
England, . .			2	32	34
Ireland, . .		2	1	59	62
Foreign, . .				1	1
Grand total,	62	47	16	794	919

For these, to Scotsmen, interesting details, the author is indebted to the kindness of Lieutenant-Colonel Macdonald, the present commander of that distinguished corps, to whom he is happy to make this public acknowledgment.

END OF VOL. XI.



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